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# Racist Language in Society and in Dictionaries: A Pragmatic Perspective

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**Abstract:** After a reference in the Introduction to action by pressure groups against derogatory language used by the speech community when referring to particular social groups or social convictions, mention is made of various unprotesting social groups. The whole of section 2 is devoted to a discussion of racist language in society. Seven different categories are illustrated with examples from various languages. The important question of how racist language should be handled in dictionaries is examined in section 3. Examples of protests by ethnic pressure groups are given, followed by a wide-ranging discussion of subjects such as the inclusion or exclusion of racist lexical items, definitions and usage labels of racist items, and the utilization of usage examples of racist items with definitia. Where applicable, suitable definitions and effectual usage labels are suggested.

**Keywords:** DEFINIENTIA, ETHNIC, EXAMPLES OF RACIST LANGUAGE, FAUNA AND FLORA, GEOGRAPHIC NAMES, INCLUSION OR EXCLUSION, INTERRACIAL, MULTICULTURAL AND POLYETHNIC SOCIETIES, PRAGMATIC PERSPECTIVE, PRESSURE GROUPS, RACE, RACIST, RACIST EXPRESSIONS, RACIST LANGUAGE, RACIST LANGUAGE IN DICTIONARIES, RACIST LANGUAGE IN SOCIETY, RACIST SECONDARY SENSES, SCHOOL DICTIONARIES, UNPROTESTING SOCIAL GROUPS, USAGE EXAMPLES, USAGE LABELS

**Opsomming:** *Rassistiese taal in die gemeenskap en in woordeboeke: 'n pragmatiese perspektief.* Na 'n verwysing in die inleiding na protesaksies deur drukgroepe teen neerhalende taalgebruik deur die spraakgemeenskap wanneer na bepaalde sosiale groepe of sosiale oortuigings verwys word, word melding gemaak van verskillende nieprotesterende sosiale groepe. Die hele afdeling 2 word gewy aan 'n bespreking van rassistiese taal in die gemeenskap. Sewe verskillende kategorieë word toegelig met voorbeelde uit verskillende tale. Die belangrike vraag van hoe rassistiese taal in woordeboeke gehanteer behoort te word, word in afdeling 3 ondersoek. Voorbeelde van proteste deur etniese drukgroepe word gegee, gevolg deur 'n omvattende bespreking van onderwerpe soos die insluiting of weglating van rassistiese leksikale items, definisies en gebruiksetikette van rassistiese items, en die aanwending van voorbeeldmateriaal van rassistiese items by definiense. Waar van toepassing, word geskikte definisies en doeltreffende gebruiksetikette aan die hand gedoen.

**Slutelwoorde:** DEFINIENSE, DRUKGROEPE, ETNIES, FAUNA EN FLORA, GEBRUIKSETIKETTE, GEOGRAFIESE NAME, INSLUITING OF WEGLATING, INTERRASSIEEL, MULTIKULTURELE EN POLI-ETNIESE GEMEENSAPPE, NIEPROTESTERENDE SOSIALE GROEPE,

PRAGMATIESE PERSPEKTIEF, RAS, RASSISTIES, RASSISTIESE SEKONDÊRE BETEKENISSE, RASSISTIESE TAAL, RASSISTIESE TAAL IN DIE GEMEENSKAP, RASSISTIESE TAAL IN WOORDEBOEKE, RASSISTIESE UITDRUKKINGS, SKOOLWOORDEBOEKE, VOORBEELDE VAN RASSISTIESE TAAL, VOORBEELDMATERIAAL

## Contents

1. Introduction
  - 1.1 Editorial problem areas
  - 1.2 Action by pressure groups
  - 1.3 Unprotesting social groups
2. Racist language in society
  - 2.1 The origin of racist language
  - 2.2 Definitions of terms relating to racist language
  - 2.3 Examples of racist language
3. The treatment of racist language in dictionaries
  - 3.1 Protests by ethnic pressure groups
  - 3.2 Inclusion or exclusion of racist lexical items
  - 3.3 Definitions and usage labels of racist lexical items
  - 3.4 Usage examples of racist lexical items
4. Conclusion

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Editorial problem areas

In his *Lexicography Today. An annotated bibliography of the theory of lexicography* (1988) Zgusta included a 46-page index of topics treated by the authors listed in the bibliography. This wide-ranging index of subjects pertaining to metalexicography and lexicographical macrostructure and microstructure provides aspiring as well as experienced lexicographers with a salutary insight into the awesome, even daunting array of editorial problem areas they might encounter in the course of compiling their dictionaries.

Since a dictionary is generally intended and regarded as a practical reference book for users who are to a certain extent acquainted with its subject-matter, the lexicographer may well expect critical comment from individual users or reviewers. Such mainly unconcerted comments should, however, not be unduly worrying, provided they are given the necessary thought with a view to adjusting the dictionary's editorial policy on valid critical points and thereby making the dictionary more informative and user-friendly.

## 1.2 Action by pressure groups

A rather more serious threat to the acceptability of a dictionary (or perhaps even to the lexicographer's professional status and self-confidence) is posed by concerted criticism, sometimes backed by destructive action, from pressure groups in the community. Such criticism initially takes the form of protests against derogatory words, meanings and expressions used by the community at large when referring to particular social groups or social convictions. Eventually these protests are directed against the inclusion of such objectionable and offensive lexical items in dictionaries. These protests stem from the authority attributed to dictionaries by the general public, whereby such opprobrious usages are regarded as being wrongly enshrined in the lexicon as stereotypes.

The following are some examples of sensitive social areas involving group sensibilities, especially about the use of offensive or derogatory language with regard to such areas: obscenity, gays (male homosexuals, lesbians), religion, language and culture, political ideology, economy, physical and/or mental disability (cripples, the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the maimed, epilepsy, Down syndrome, idiocy, imbecility, insanity), sexism, racism.

While the more vociferous pressure groups often have recourse to the popular press or the electronic media for opportunities to state their case regarding the above-mentioned sensitive areas, such subjects are also treated in publications characterized by a more dispassionate and scientific approach. The following are but a few examples, specifically with reference to the handling in dictionaries of terminology relating to such sensitive areas: *obscenity*: Burchfield (1972); *gays*: Aman (1988-89), McCluskey (1989); *religion*: Burchfield (1974, 1980); *political ideology*: Strauß (1982), Esterhuyse (1987), Maligne-Klappenbach (1989), Webb (1989); *physical and/or mental disability*: Jost and Crocker (1987); *sexism*: Whitcut (1984), McCluskey (1989), Hauptfleisch (1989), Beylefeld (1992). Publications on racist language will be cited where relevant further on in this paper.

## 1.3 Unprotesting social groups

In contrast to the mostly vigorous protests registered by the pressure groups discussed under 1.2 it is remarkable that there are also social groups that do not seem to feel a need to protest against being associated with names having a non-neutral character. Such names can be divided into three groups.

**1.3.1** The inhabitants of particular areas are sometimes referred to by names which are supposed to show up some characteristic. South African examples are: *Piesangboere*, *Banana Boys* (Natalians), *Vaalpense*, *Vaalies* (Transvalers), *Woltone* (inhabitants of the Cape Province) and *Blikore* (Free Staters). Such

names are mostly of jocular intent, used without malice or racist connotations. Some degree of non-racist disparagement is, however, sometimes present in references to certain towns, regions or countries, for example *Putsonderwater*, *Pofadder*, *Timbuctoo*, *Sleepy Hollow* (Stellenbosch), *to be Stellenbosched*, *Karoo*, *Free State coal* (dried cattle dung used as fuel), *banana republic* (small state in Central America), *Bananaland*, *Piesangland* (Natal), *Cape Smoke* (the earliest, rough Cape brandy), *Durban Poison* (a particularly potent type of dagga cultivated in Natal), *Natal fever* (languor and inactivity attributed to the hot climate of Natal), *Natal sore* (an eruption similar to a veld sore), *Bananacity* (Durban), *Kaasland*, *Kaaskopland* (the Netherlands), or the (in)famous *Wet van Transvaal*.

1.3.2 It is also significant, with respect to the question of personal and group sensibilities, that groups of individuals are quite happy to bear surnames which, due to their popular association with corresponding common names, could be regarded as seemingly not having a purely neutral character. Some examples, culled mostly from the *Cape Peninsula Telephone Directory* (1993-94), are:

Vice	Broodryk	Grootendorst
Savage	Februarie	Onrust
Fear	Varkevisser	Bierenbroodspot
Shout	Kleingeld	Borst
Rattle	Kleintjies	Borstrock
Coward	Oor	Taaibosch
Fox	Slinger	De Beer
Sardine	September	De Leew
Starling	Onkruid	La Fleur
Peacock	Buffel	Mouton
Ramsbottom	Snoek	Kaltwasser
Sweatman	Makriel	Donner
Peach	Malgas	Fledermaus
Peel	Kiewiet	Grosskopf
Pepper	Tarentaal	Hauptfleisch
Daddy	Olifant	Rindfleisch
Tickle	Pofadder	Rotkopf
Koekemoer	Steenbok	Puffpaff
Kaffer	Spaarwater	Fleischmann

1.3.3 The above-mentioned absence of personal objection is also evident in the case of personal names used metaphorically as common nouns in pejorative senses. Thus *John* could also refer to a policeman, a prostitute's client or a

toilet, while *Dick*, *Johnson* and *John Thomas* are known as euphemisms for the penis. Compare, too, the use of *Jim* in *Jim Crow*, *Jim Fish*, and also *Tom* in the expressions *Tom*, *Dick and Harry*, *peeping Tom*, and *Uncle Tom*. In Afrikaans a chamber-pot could be called a *Koos*, and expressions with negative connotations, such as *Dom Jan*, *Jan Drel*, *Jan Pampoen*, *Kaatjie Kekkelbek*, *eers baas dan Klaas*, *Piet Verdriet* and *Van der Merwe* jokes are well-known.

1.3.4 It would be interesting, from a psycho- and sociolinguistic point of view, to try to establish *why* the mildly pejorative but non-racist use of proper names, as illustrated above, hardly causes the individuals involved any distress, compared to the outcry by members of racial groups that consider themselves insulted by language forms which they regard as racist. However, such a study does not actually fall within the ambit of the lexicographer's assignment. His task is to formulate and apply a clear editorial policy for the lexicographical treatment of such proper names as common names, based on a responsible evaluation of all available oral and written evidence pertaining to the usage of these names.

## 2. Racist language in society

2.1 In his comedy *Asinaria*, 477, the early Latin author Plautus coined the dictum "Lupus est homo homini", man is a wolf to his fellow-man, i.e. his biggest enemy. Throughout past centuries this comment could be applied not only to physical violence between individuals of the same ethnic group or between different nations, but also to hostile, contemptuous, derisive or otherwise disparaging opinions expressed by one nation or ethnic group about another. An early instance of the latter is the utterance by Laocoon in Vergil's *Aeneid* II, 49: "Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes", I fear the Greeks, even if they bring gifts, with reference to the Trojan Horse left behind by the Greeks. A more modern example is *perfidious Albion*, the English rendering of the French *la perfide Albion*, described in *A Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary* I (1972: 55) as: a rhetorical expression for "England", with reference to her alleged treacherous policy towards foreigners.

Racist language has occurred and still occurs in probably every society. Usually it originates from antagonistic interracial contact situations. As a result of disagreeable personal experiences in such situations, judgements and prejudices are formed and given expression through disparaging utterances which readily become stereotypes. Repeated use of such stereotypes fosters the perception that they are to be accepted as forming part of the lexicon of the language in question.

## 2.2 Definitions of terms relating to racist language

The treatment of a sensitive subject such as *racist language* requires acceptable working definitions of certain key terms. For the purpose of this paper I suggest the following definitions of such terms:

*racist*: A pejorative adjective referring to an attitude of interracial superiority, prejudice, antagonism, discrimination or debasement, as manifested by word or deed in political, economic, social, cultural or ecclesiastical spheres of life.

*interracial*: Existing between or mutually affecting different races.

*race*: A social group of persons connected by common descent or origin; a tribe, nation or people regarded as of common stock; a group of several tribes or peoples forming a distinct ethnic stock.

*ethnic*: having a common national or cultural tradition; denoting origin by birth or descent rather than nationality; relating to race or culture. (This definition is based on the senses of *ethnic* appearing in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*<sup>8</sup>, 1990.)

*racist language*: Any word, phrase, expression or sense characterised by a racist attitude, or considered to be so characterised.

## 2.3 Examples of racist language

The examples given in the lists below have been gathered mainly from dictionary sources, but also from articles about racist language, newspaper reports, letters to newspapers, fiction and introspective perceptions of which words and expressions are racially offensive and insulting. With regard to the acknowledgement of introspective perceptions and fiction as recognized sources of racist language Landau (1984: 188) sounds two notes of caution:

The advice (in dictionaries on whether a lexical item is offensive or not — D.C.H.) is only about *public* behavior, since many reputable members of society routinely use terms of insult in private among like-minded people to whom these words are not in the least offensive.

Many citations for terms of insult in fiction do not at all support the judgement that they are offensive, since they are often used among intimates who share the same prejudices.

Landau (1984: 188) does, however, point out that, in decisions on the indication of offensiveness, "the lexicographer is compelled to use his own experience, moderated of necessity by his own moral views, whether consciously or not".

The examples are divided into four main categories and given under the relevant language headings. (*English* includes British, American, Australian, Canadian, New Zealand and South African English.) The first two categories are also subdivided into subcategories.

### 2.3.1 Common nouns and personal nouns as racist references to members of ethnic groups

2.3.1.1 The first subcategory contains examples of the above-mentioned nouns in the use of which initially no derogatory connotation was intended or felt by members of the particular ethnic group to whom they were referring. In passing, it should be noted that it is not always easy to determine whether at a particular stage the use of a term is racist or not. In his discussion of "criteria for finding some usages vulgarly offensive or contemptuous or abusive" and "the degree of offensiveness of specified terms under specified conditions" Landau (1984: 187) says *inter alia*:

The same term uttered with a laugh to a member of one's own group might be deeply offensive if uttered to a member of another group ... Even between members of two different groups, supposedly offensive words are not necessarily offensive if the two people know each other very well or if the situation is one where certain male ritualistic behavior is considered appropriate. Insult can be affectionate.

However, gradually such originally uncontroversial names assume a racist image which causes them to be substituted by more acceptable terms. As the substitutions in time also fall from grace new names have to be chosen or devised. A classic example of this process is the South African English and Afrikaans names *Kaffir* (*kaffer*) which in turn have become *native* (*naturel*), *Bantu* (*Bantoe*), *African* (*Afrikaan*, rare) and *black* (*swarte*), the latter being the terms favoured at present and also used by some dark-skinned race groups other than those of Negroid origin.

In the case of *nigger* varying degrees of usage acceptability are illustrated by its entries in different editions of American and English dictionaries. In the 1891 edition of *Webster's International Dictionary of the English Language* the entry is given as "A negro; — in vulgar derision or depreciation", whilst *Webster's Third* (1961) is less condemnatory in its indication of the word's usage register: "NEGRO — usu. taken to be offensive". A turn-of-the-century usage of *nigger* is indicated as follows in the 1900 edition of *A Standard Dictionary of the English Language*:

**nigger, n. 1.** A negro: a word once in good use, and in England still utterable by a gentleman, but in America now vulgar and opprobrious; also used contemptuously of a swarthy, and even of a low, objectionable person.

The *Standard's* 1967 edition (*International Edition*) defines *nigger* with less usage tolerance as "A Negro or member of any dark-skinned people: an offensive and vulgar term of contempt".

The entry of **Nigger** in the 1933 edition of *The Oxford English Dictionary*, viz. "1. A negro. (Colloq. and usu. contemptuous.)" has been expanded in *A Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary II* (1976) by the addition of the following more forthright usage directions: "Except in Black English vernacular, where it remains common, now virtually restricted to contexts of deliberate and contemptuous ethnic abuse."

**Further examples of subcategory 2.3.1.1**

**(1) English**

Asiatic	Mary
boy (household servant)	Muhammadan (Mohammedan)
Bushman	nanny
Coloured	nigger (verb)
coolie	niggering
ethnic	niggery
European	non-European
girl (servant)	non-white
Hottentot	poor white
Jim	Red Indian
John	redskin
John Chinaman	Sammy

**(2) Afrikaans**

aia	koelie
armblanke	mak Kaffer
Asiaat	meid
bediende	Mohammedaan
Boesman	nieblanke
Boesnot	outa
gammat	skepsel
Hottentot	Slamaier
jong	Slams
Kaffers (kaffers) (adjective)	volkies
Kakie	volk (brown, black farm-hands)



Kleurling  
klimmeid  
klong

wit kaffer  
witman

The racist element in *witman* is suggested by its meaning "high-minded person", which impliedly attributes ethnic superiority exclusively to whites compared to people of colour. Compare also the given meanings (translated) of the following entries in the *Woordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal V* (1968) under **kaffer** 1 a: *mak kaffer* "a black who has adopted the ways of the whites", implying innate wildness, and *wit kaffer* "black of good character" which suggests that blacks characteristically lack the good character traits attributed to whites.

(3) **Dutch:** Hottentot, kaffer, kafferen (verb), koelie.

Resulting from the increasing usage sensitivity attaching to the racist appellations given in 2.3.1.1, a number of them have been replaced in use by more acceptable "affirmative" substitutions, particularly in South African English and Afrikaans. Examples are:

(1) **English**

Asiatic > Asian  
Bushman > San  
coolie > Indian  
ethnic > black  
European > white  
Hottentot > Khoikhoi  
maid > housekeeper  
Mary > Indian woman or girl  
Muhammadan (Mohammedan) > Muslim (Moslem)  
nanny > child minder  
non-European (non-white) > brown, black person or a specific ethnic group  
denomination such as Indian, Ndebele, Sotho, Venda, Xhosa, Zulu, etc.  
Red Indian > American Indian  
Sammy > Indian man

(2) **Afrikaans**

aia > bruin, swart vrou  
Asiaat > Asiër  
bediende > huishulp  
Boesman > San  
Hottentot > Koikoi  
Kleurling > bruin mens  
koelie > Indiër

- meid > bruin, swart vrou (meisie), Indiërvrou (-meisie)
- Mohammedaan > Moslem (Moesliem)
- nieblanke > bruin, swart mens (swarte) or a specific ethnic group denomination such as Indiër, Ndebele, Sotho, Venda, Xhosa, Zoeloe (Zulu), etc.
- outa > bruin, swart man
- skepsel > bruin, swart mens
- Slamaier (Slams) > Kaapse Maleier, Moslem (Moesliem)
- volk, volkies > bruin, swart arbeiders

**2.3.1.2** This subcategory includes names, or particular senses of such names, which seem to have been derogatory and racist from the start, with apparently no subsequent attempt at amelioration. The following are examples of such stereotypes:

**(1) English**

Abo (abo)	mick
Canuck	nig-nog
charra	ofay
Chinaman	Paki
chink(ie)	Peruvian
coon	Polack
crunch(ie)	pom (pommie, pommy)
dago	redneck
Frog	rockspider
goy	shiksa
half-breed	slant-eye
hairyback	spic
honky	Uncle Tom
Jap	WASP (Wasp) (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant)
Jim Crow	wetback
Jim Fish	white trash
jungle bunny	Whitey
kike	wog
Kraut	wop
Limey	Yid

**(2) Afrikaans**

bitterbek	Kaaskop	soutie
boesman	kerriebek	soutriem
brandhoring	kerrie-eter	soutvoet
brandoor	kerrievreter	swartasem
draaihoring	kieriekop	swarte tater
gamsketel (kamsketel)	klipkop	swartgoed

geelbek	klits	swartnasia
gifasem	koffiepit	swartnerf
goiingtot	koffiestok	swartvel
gomtot	kombersdraer	tjarra
Hotnot (hotnot)	kombersstem	tottie
hottie	kroeskop	vaalasem
houtkop	peervoël	witvel
Jooiens	Rooinek	zool

(3) Dutch: mof.

2.3.2 This category consists of compound words of which at least one component (see the lists of nouns under category 2.3.1.1 above) is considered to have a racist or otherwise negative connotation when used separately, whereby the compound as a whole is stigmatised as racist. Examples are divided into three subcategories.

2.3.2.1 This subcategory includes compounds which refer to a wide variety of dissimilar noun classes.

(1) English

Bantu administration	Kaffir beads	native man
Bantu beer	kaffir beer	native reserve
Bantu culture	Kaffir chief	native woman
Bantu education	Kaffir dictionary	nigger-ball
Bantu language	Kaffir grammar	nigger chaser
Bantu people	Kaffirland	nigger-driver
blanket native	Kaffir language	nigger-driving
Bushman painting	kaffir piano	niggerhead
Coloured people	kaffir pot	nigger heaven
coloured tribe	kaffir sheeting	nigger lover
Coolie Christmas	Kaffir War	niggershooter
coolie hat	kaffir work	niggers' knackers
delivery boy	native beer	nigger-spit
flat boy	native boy	nigger stick
garden boy	native cattle	nigger stock
Hottentot apron	native eating house	Paki-bashing
houseboy	native girl	school native
housemaid	native law	servant-girl
ironing girl	native location	wash girl

**(2) Afrikaans**

Bantoebier	Kleurlingafrikaans
Bantoehorde	Kleurlingarbeider
Bantoe-impi	Kleurlingbaster
Bantoeonderwys	Kleurlingbediende
Bantoereg	Kleurlingbevolkingsgroep
Bantoestam	Kleurlingkieser
Bantoetaal	Kleurlingklong
binnemeid	Kleurlinglokasie
Boesmanboude	Kleurlingmeid
Boesmanmeid	Kleurlingposjong
boesmaskelm (adjective)	Kleurlingras
Boesmanstêre	kleurlingskepsel
Boesmantekening	Kleurlingtaal
Griekwahottentot	Kleurlingvolk
hanskakie	Kleurlingvolkies
Hotnotsafrikaans (Hottentotsafrikaans)	Kleurlingvoorman
hotnotsblymaak	Kleurlingvraagstuk
hotnotshoender	Kleurlingwoonbuurt
hotnotshond	Knopneuskaffer
hotnotslaan (hotnotslaanspeletjie)	Koelieafrikaans
hotnotsklontjie (hottentotsklontjie)	Koeliearbeid
Hotnotspraatjies (Hottentotspraatjies)	koeliebasaar
hotnotsriel (hottentotsriel)	Koeliebuurt
Hottentotlokasie	koeliediamant
Hottentotmeid	koeliegriep
Hottentotrondloper	koelieklere
hottentotsvoorskoot	Koeliekrisimis (koeliekrisimis)
Kafferafrikaans	Koeliemeid
kafferbaai	Koelietaal
kafferbees	Koeliewerk
kafferbier	Koeliewinkel
kafferblits	komberskaffer
Kafferboetie	komhuisbediende
kafferbrak	komhuiskaffer
Kafferdans	komhuismeid
Kafferdiensbode	komhuisskepsel
kafferdom (adjective)	komhuisvolk
Kaffereethuis	Koranahottentot
Kaffergemors	Koranameid
kafferhond	Koranaskepsel
Kafferkampong	kraalkaffer
Kafferklansie	lokasiekaffer
kafferklavier	meidepraatjies

Kafferklong	meidewerk
kafferkombers	mynkaffer
Kafferkonstabel	Namakwahottentot
Kafferkraal	naturellebevolking
kafferkrul	naturellegebied
kafferland	naturellekommissaris
kafferlui (adjective)	naturelleonderwys
kafferluis	naturellereg
kaffermaniere	naturelleservaat
Kaffermeid	naturelletaal
Kafferoorlog	naturellevraagstuk
Kafferpeperkorrels	naturellewetgewing
Kafferpolisie	oumeidknoop
kafferpot	oumeid-onder-die-kombers
kafferpraatjies	strykmeid
Kafferskepsel	tuinjong
kaffersleg (adjective)	uitkaffer (verb)
Kafferstam	volkshuis
kaffervee	volkswyn
Kaffervolk	wasmeid
Kafferwerk	witmansland
Kakieboer	witmanstaal
Kakiekaffer	Xhosakaffer
kindermeid	Zoeloekaffer

In the case of *witmansland* and *witmanstaal* the racist element is apparent in the racial exclusiveness implied by these terms, whereby the component *witman* could also acquire this negative connotation.

### (3) Dutch: koeliewerk, uitkafferen (verb).

Unlike the increasingly racist connotations the primary (ethnic) senses of *Hottentot*, *kaffir* and *coolie* are acquiring in South African English and especially in Afrikaans, these connotations are not as yet present in the primary senses of their Dutch counterparts *Hottentot*, *kaffer* and *koelie*. In Dutch, however, these names do have a disparaging secondary (figurative) meaning, viz. "a rough, uncouth or stupid person". In Dutch compounds with *Hottentot*, *kaffer* and *koelie* as components, these components are virtually all used in their primary, non-racist connotations, which consequently renders compounds like *Hottentotschort*, *Hottentottentaal*, *kafferland*, *kafferpokken*, *kafferpolitiek*, *kafferstam*, *kafferwerk*, *Zoeloekaffer*, *koeliearbeid*, *koeliedienst*, *koelieloon*, *koeliewerving*, *koelieziekte* non-racist. The only compound with possible racist overtones seems to be *uitkafferen* (call (someone) a blockhead; criticize abusively), which relates to the above-mentioned secondary sense of *kaffer*, a sense which could eventually

cause *kaffer*, at present a neutral designation of a member of a particular ethnic group, as well as compounds with *kaffer* to acquire a racist register.

The following sample illustrates the need for ameliorative action felt in cases such as those given under 2.3.2.1(1) and (2) above.

**(1) English**

Bantu beer, Kaffir beer, native beer > sorghum beer, KB, mqombothi, tshwala  
Bantu culture > black culture  
Bantu language > African language  
Bantu people > black people, blacks  
Bushman painting > San painting  
Coolie Christmas > Moharram, Divali  
delivery boy > delivery man  
garden boy > garden help  
Hottentot apron > pudendal apron, velamen vulvae  
house boy > house help  
housemaid > housekeeper  
ironing girl > ironing woman  
Kaffir chief > black chief  
Kaffir dictionary > African language dictionary  
Kaffir grammar > African language grammar  
Kaffir language > African language  
kaffir piano > marimba  
kaffir sheeting > bhayi, bhayi sheeting, K-sheeting, Bolton cloth, Bolton sheeting, Benson cloth  
Kaffir War > Frontier War  
native boy, eating house, girl, law, location, man, reserve, woman > black boy, eating house, girl, law, township, man, homeland, woman  
niggerhead > bollard  
niggershooter > slingshot, catapult  
nigger stick > officer's baton  
wash girl > wash woman

**(2) Afrikaans**

Bantoebier, kafferbier > letieng, magou, sorghumbier, twala  
Bantoehorde, -impi, -stam > swart horde, impi, stam  
Bantoeonderwys, naturelleonderwys > swart onderwys  
Bantoereg, naturellereg > inheemse reg, swart reg  
Bantoetaal, naturelletaal > Afrikataal  
Boesmanmeid > Sanvrou (-meisie)  
Boesmantekening > Santekening  
Griekwahottentot > Griekwa  
Hottentotlokasie > Koikoiwoonbuurt

Hottentotmeid > Koikoivrou (-meisie)  
Hottentotrondloper > Koikoirondloper  
hottentotsvoorskoot > velamen vulvae  
Kafferafrikaans > Swart Afrikaans  
Kafferboetie > negrofiel  
Kafferdiensbode > swart diensbode  
Kafferkampong > swart kampong  
Kafferklandisie > swart klandisie  
kafferklavier > marimba  
Kafferklong > swart seun  
Kafferkonstabel > swart konstabel  
Kafferland, naturellegebied > swart tuisland, swart nasionale staat  
Kaffermeid > swart vrou (meisie)  
Kafferoorlog > Grensoorlog  
Kafferpolisie > swart polisie  
kafferpot > driepootpot  
Kafferskepsel > swart mens  
Kaffervolk > swart volk  
kindermeid > kinderoppasster  
Kleurlingafrikaans > Bruin Afrikaans  
Kleurlingarbeider > bruin arbeider  
Kleurlingbediende > bruin huishulp  
Kleurlingbevolkingsgroep > bruin bevolkingsgroep  
Kleurlingkieser > bruin kieser  
Kleurlingklong > bruin seun  
Kleurlinglokasie > bruin woonbuurt  
Kleurlingmeid > bruin vrou (meisie)  
Kleurlingras > bruin ras  
Kleurlingskepsel > bruin mens  
Kleurlingvolk, Kleurlingvolkies > bruin arbeiders  
Kleurlingvoorman > bruin voorman  
Kleurlingwoonbuurt > bruin woonbuurt  
Koelieafrikaans > Indiërafrikaans  
Koeliearbeid > Indiëarbeid  
Koeliebuurt > Indiëbuurt  
koeliegriep > Oosterse griep  
Koeliekrismis > Moeharram, Divali  
Koeliemeid > Indiërvrou (-meisie)  
Koelietaal > Indiese taal  
Koeliewinkel > Indiërwinkel  
kombuisbediende > kombuishulp  
kombuis kaffer > manlike swart kombuishulp  
kombuismeid > vroulike bruin, swart kombuishulp  
kombuisskepsel > bruin, swart kombuishulp

Koranhottentot, Koranaskepsel > Korana  
 Koranameid > Koranavrou (-meisie)  
 mynkaffer > swart mynwerker  
 Namakwahottentot > Namakwa  
 naturellebevolking > swart bevolking  
 naturellegebied > swart gebied  
 naturelleservaat > swart gebied  
 naturellewetgewing > swart wetgewing  
 ouseid-onder-die-komers > ou-vrou-onder-die-komers  
 strykmeid > vroulike bruin, swart strykhulp  
 tuinjong > manlike bruin, swart tuinhulp  
 uitkaffer > uitskel  
 volkshuis > arbeidershuis  
 wasmeid > vroulike bruin, swart washulp  
 Xhosakaffer > Xhosa  
 Zoeloe-kaffer > Zoeloe

**2.3.2.2** This subcategory includes compound vernacular names of fauna and flora of which the first (determinant) component is currently regarded as racist. Examples, which have been selected mostly from *The Oxford English Dictionary* (1933), *A Supplement to the OED* (1972-1986), *Webster's Third* (1961), *A Dictionary of South African English*<sup>4</sup> (1991), the *Woordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal I* (1950), IV (1961), V (1968), Smith (1966) and the word collection of the Bureau of the WAT, are grouped under **Fauna** and **Flora** headings.

**Fauna**

**(1) English**

Bushman rice	Kaffir crane	niggerfish
Hottentot fish	Kaffir finch	niggergoose
Hottentot god	niggerbug	niggerhead

**(2) Afrikaans**

boesmanhaantjie	hottentotsvydopluis	kafferkoringaarwurm
boesmanrys	kafferbokkrooitjie	kafferkoringmuggie
hotnotgrysmol	kafferboomblaarmyner	kafferkoringplantluis
hotnotkruipmol	kafferboomblaartonnael	kafferkraai
hotnotsgot	kafferboomboorder	kafferkraanvoël
hotnotsluis	kafferboomlootboorder	kafferkransvoël
hottentotgrysmol	kafferboomruspe(r)	kaffermossie
hottentotkruipmol	kafferboomsnuitkewer	kaffermuishond
hottentotsgot	kafferboontjiekalander	kafferpapegaai
hottentotsluis	kafferbuffel	kafferpruimboorder
hottentotsrys	kafferhut	kafferskaap



hottentotskaap  
hottentotsvis

kafferkoning  
kafferkopervlerkie

kaffervink  
kafferweeluis

(3) Dutch: bosjesmannenrijst, hottentotsgodje, kafferbuffel, kaffervink.

**Flora**

**(1) English**

Bushman grass  
Hottentot bean tree  
Hottentot bread  
Hottentot cabbage  
Hottentot cherry  
Hottentot fig  
Hottentot's head  
Hottentot tea  
Kaffir bean  
Kaffir boom  
Kaffir bread  
Kaffir-bread tree

Kaffir bride  
Kaffir cherry  
Kaffir corn  
Kaffir date  
Kaffir grapes  
Kaffir hut  
Kaffir lily  
Kaffir melon  
Kaffir millet  
Kaffir orange  
Kaffir plum  
Kaffir sorrel

Kaffir tea  
Kaffir-thorn tree  
Kaffir tree  
Kaffir watermelon  
nigger baby  
nigger daisy  
niggerhead  
niggerhead cactus  
nigger lice  
nigger pine  
nigger toe  
nigger weed

**(2) Afrikaans**

boesmanamandel  
boesmanboegoe  
boesmandoring  
boesmandruiwe  
boesmangras  
boesmankers  
boesmangifbos  
boesmanskweek  
boesmansoog  
boesmansrietjie  
boesmanstee  
boesmanuintjie  
boesmanvingertjies  
hotnotsboegoe  
hotnotsboerboon  
hotnotsbrood  
hotnotsbroodboom  
hotnotshaar  
hotnotskersie  
hotnotskooigoed  
hotnotskool  
hotnotskougoed

hottentotstootjie  
hottentotsvy  
kafferlmanak  
kafferakkasia  
kafferbal  
kafferbessiebos  
kafferblom  
kafferboegoe  
kafferboom  
kafferboontjie  
kafferbroodboom  
kafferbruid  
kafferdadeld  
kafferdagga  
kafferdissel  
kafferdoring  
kafferdruiwe  
kafferdubbeltjie  
kaffergifboom  
kaffergrondboontjie  
kafferhut  
kafferkalmoes

kafferskuil  
kafferskuilpalmiet  
kafferslaai  
kafferslangwortel  
kaffersuring  
kaffertabak  
kaffertabakboom  
kaffertee  
kaffertou  
kaffertulp  
kafferui  
kafferwaatlemoen  
kaffer-wag-'n-bietjie  
kafferwortel  
kafferysterhout  
kakiebos  
kakiegras  
kakieklits  
kakiekweek  
kakiesydissel  
koeliedruiwe  
meideboom

hotnotsriem	kafferkambro	meidebossie
hotnotstee	kafferkanferfoelie	meidederm
hotnotstoontjie	kafferkaroo	meidestert
hotnotsvy	kafferkastaiing	meidjieblaar
hottentotsamandel	kafferkersie	meidjie-jan-willemse
hottentotsboegoe	kafferklapper	meidjiewillemse
hottentotsboerboon	kafferkop	oumeidbos
hottentotsbrood	kafferkoppampoen	oumeidboud
hottentotsbroodboom	kafferkoring	oumeidebos
hottentotsgifboom	kafferlelie	oumeideknie
hottentotsgifbos	kafferlemoen	oumeid-op-die-werf
hottentotshaar	kaffermanna	oumeid-se-derm
hottentotskappie	kaffermielie	oumeid-se-knie
hottentotskersie	kafferpatat	oumeid-se-koek
hottentotskooigoed	kafferpruim	oumeid-se-onderrok
hottentotskool	kafferpyl	oumeid-se-snuif
hottentotskougoed	kafferrondeboontjie	oumeid-se-snuifdoos
hottentotsriem	kafferrosyntjie	oumeidsnuif
hottentotstee	kaffersering	stinkafrikaner

Although there is no direct etymological connection between *afrikaner* in *stinkafrikaner* and the ethnic group name *Afrikaner* (cf. Boshoff and Nienaber 1967: 124), there is nevertheless a perception in spoken language that *stinkafrikaner* can be racially equated with *Afrikaner*, due to the absence of orthographic distinction by means of initial lower-case and capital letters, and through ignorance of the etymological difference.

(3) **Dutch:** hottentotsbrood, hottentottenvijg, kafferboom, kafferkoren.

About the possible semantic effect the above-mentioned initial components might have on the whole compound name, Smith (1966: 5) states the following:

The casual student of the lists of Afrikaans vernacular names is struck by the prominence with which various nations and native tribes have become associated with the names of plants. It would be a very serious mistake to ascribe some implied quality of inferiority to every name in which the words "kaffer" or "hottentot" occur and they are by no means few.

In (1966: 7) Smith expands as follows on the meaning of "kaffer" in compound names:

When a list of vernacular names is examined with special reference to those names which include the adjective "kaffer", certain clear differentiation in the meaning attached to the word becomes evident ... In com-

ound names the adjective "kaffer" came to mean "used by the Kaffirs" or "of the Kaffirs", but gradually deteriorated into the meaning conveying "inferior quality".

As a result of name components such as *Bushman* (*boesman*), *Hottentot* (*hotnot*, *hottentot*), *Kaffir* (*kaffer*), *khaki* (*kakie*), *coolie* (*koelie*); *meid*, *nigger* and *oumeid* having at present acquired an undeniably racist register, the question arises how fauna and flora names containing such components can best be substituted by generally acceptable vernacular names. Two methods come to mind, viz. the use of Latin taxonomic names as common names and the favouring of neutral synonymic vernacular names to the exclusion of racist designations. Examples are:

#### Fauna

Non-racist examples: *Hippopotamus amphibius* > hippopotamus; *Equus zebra* > zebra.

Racist examples: niggergoose > cormorant; kafferkraai, kafferpapegai > boskraai; kafferkraanvoël, kafferkransvoël > mahem.

#### Flora

Kaffir corn > sorghum; kafferlelie > clivia (cf. *Erica* > erica and *Protea* > protea); Kaffir tree > coral tree; nigger daisy > black-eyed Susan.

The following are further examples of these two ameliorative mechanisms:

#### Fauna

##### (1) English

Hottentot god > praying mantis

Kaffir crane > crowned crane

Kaffir finch > red bishop-bird

niggerbug > negro bug

nigger fish > coney

niggerhead > scoter

##### (2) Afrikaans

boesmanhaantjie > dagbrekertjie

boesmanrys, hottentotsrys > termietlarwes, miereiers

hotnotsgot, hottentotsgot > bidsprinkaan, roofsprinkaan

hottentotskaap > afrikanerskaap

hottentotsvis > hangberg, hangberger

hottentotsvydopluis > suurvydopluis, vygiedopluis

kafferboontjiekalander > Chinese boontjiekalander  
kafferkonink > flap, kolvink, mikstertbyevanger, mossiekonink, pypsteel, rookvoël  
kafferkoringaarwurm > Amerikaanse bolwurm, kopwurm, mielibeaardwurm, tamatiewurm  
kafferkoringplantluis > suikerrietplantluis  
kaffermossie > bergmossie  
kaffermuishond > stinkmuishond  
kafferskaap > steekhaarafrikanerskaap  
kaffervink > flap, koninkvink, langstertvink, rooivink, sakaboela  
kafferweeluis > pampoenstinkbesie

### (3) Dutch

bosjesmannenrijs > termieten  
hottentotsgodje > biddende mantis  
kafferbuffel > Afrikaanse buffel  
kaffervink > weduvogel

## Flora

### (1) English

Kaffir lily > clivia  
niggerhead > negrohead beech, purple coneflower  
niggerhead cactus > bisnaga  
niggerpine > Jersey pine  
nigger toe > Brazil nut  
nigger weed > Joe-Pye weed

### (2) Afrikaans

boesmanamandel > bitteramandel  
boesmandruiwe > bobbejaandruiwe, bobbejaantou, wildedruiwe  
boesmangras > bosluisgras, twagras  
boesmankers > griekwadoring, lemoendoring, skilpaddoring, ystervarkbos  
boesmansgifbos, kaffergifboom > gifboom, naboom, noorsdoring, wolweboontjie  
boesmanstee > dassiebos, jakobjong, spelonk(e)tee  
hotnotsboerboon, hottentotsboerboon > huilboerboon, huilbos, Kaapse boerboon  
hotnotsbrood, hottentotsbrood > olifantsvoet  
hotnotsbroodboom, hottentotsbroodboom > broodboom  
hotnotshaar, hottentotshaar > bitterbossie  
hotnotskersie, hottentotskersie > aasvoëlbessie, swartbas, tolletjie, wilde koffie  
hotnotskooigoed, hottentotskooigoed > keibossie

hotnotskool, hottentotskool > veldkool, wildeblomkool  
hotnotskougoed, hottentotskougoed > ganna, kougoed  
hotnotstee, hottentotstee > vaaltee  
hotnotsvy, hottentotsvy > ghoena, ghôkum, gladvy, perdevy, suurv  
hottentotsamandel > bitteramandel, wildeamandel  
hottentotsgifboom, hottentotsgifbos > gifboom  
hottentotskappie > moederkappie  
kafferlmanak > bloedblom  
kafferakkasia, kafferdoring, kaffer-wag-'n-bietjie > blinkblaarhaakdoring,  
blinkblaar-wag-'n-bietjie, katdoring, klein-wag-'n-bietjie, rank-wag-'n-bietjie  
kafferbal > brinjal, eiervrug  
kafferbessiebos > rosyntjiebos  
kafferblom > poinsettia  
kafferboom > koraalboom, koraalplant, kurkboom  
kafferbroodboom > broodboom  
kafferadel, kafferpruim > suurbessie, suurpruim, wildepruim  
kafferdagga > dagga, klipdagga, knopdagga, koppiesdagga, malkopdagga,  
perdedagga, rooipootjiedagga, stranddagga, velddagga, wildedagga  
kafferdissel > Skotse dissel  
kafferdruive > aarbossie, suikerbossie, teesuikerbossie, teesuikerkaroo, veld-  
kaiings  
kafferdubbeltjie > dubbeltjie, dubbeltjiedoring, perdedubbeltjie, rondomlelik,  
stranddubbeltjie, volstruisdubbeltjie  
kaffergrondboontjie, kafferrondeboontjie > Angola-ertjie, bambaragrondboon-  
tjie, grondertjie  
kafferhut > eselskos, springbokkos, springboknoors, voetbalplant  
kafferkalmoes > katazo  
kafferkambro > bergkambro, bobbejaankambro, bobbejaankos, dikvoet, don-  
kiekambro, kragman, sterkman  
kafferkanferfoelie > handskoentjie  
kafferkaroo > kousies-en-skoentjies  
kafferkastaiing > wildeamandel, wildekastaiing  
kafferkersie > opgeitjies  
kafferkop, kafferkoppampoen > hubbardskorsie, skorsie  
kafferkoring > mabêla, sorghum  
kafferlemoen > blouklapper, bobbejaanklapper, botterklapper, grootklapper,  
klapper, klapperboom, swartklapper  
kaffermanna > babala  
kafferpatat > grondaartappel, kalahariaartappel, nabba, veldaartappel  
kafferpyl > knapsakkerwel  
kafferrosyntjie > rosyntjiebos  
kaffersering > handskoentjie, trompetters, wildesering  
kafferskuil, kafferkuilspalmiet > palmiet  
kafferslaai > misbredie

kaffersuring > kolsuring  
kaffertabak > wildetabak  
kaffertee > griekwatee  
kafferui > gifbol, gifui, narsing, wilde-ui  
kafferwortel > aambeiwortel, dawidjieswortel, dikvoet, donkiekambro, ghaai-wortel, kragman, sterkman, wildedadel, wildewortel  
kafferysterhout > basterswartysterhout, fynblaarysterhout, oemsimbeet  
kakiebos > afrikanerbos, kleingousblom, knapsakkerwel  
kakiegras > knapsekerwel, rolbos  
kakieklits, kakiekwiek > Australiese dubbeltjie, Engelse dubbeltjie  
kakiesydissel > knapsakkerwel  
koeliedruiwe > belhambra, bobbejaandruiwe, inkbessiebos  
meideboom > baakhout  
meidestert > bontbeeskoutjie, damarara, marara-uintjie  
meidjie-jan-willemse, meidjiewillemse > aambeibossie, bitterbossie, kalwerbossie  
oumeidboud > kiepersol, nooiensboom, waaiboom, meiboom  
oumeidebos > stinkbos  
oumeid-se-onderrok > maanblom  
oumeid-se-snuif, oumeid-se-snuifdoos, oumeidsnuif, oumeidsnuifdoos > aap-snuif, apesnuif, bobbejaansnuif, ouweltjie  
stinkafrikaner > afrikaner, jonkmansknoop

### (3) Dutch

hottentotsbrood, hottentottenbrood > olifantsvoet  
kafferikoren > gierst, sorghum

Anticipated objections against vernacular names of fauna and flora which have *Bushman* (*boesman*), *Hottentot* (*hotnot*, *hottentot*), *Kaffir* (*kaffer*), *khaki* (*kakie*), *coolie* (*koelie*), *meid*, *nigger* and *oumeid* as components could be obviated through preemptive action by appointed committees composed of trained taxonomists in the fields of zoology and botany. These committees' terms of reference could be fourfold, viz. (a) to trace all racist names; (b) to declare such names to be objectionable in vernacular and scientific use; (c) to list existing neutral synonymic vernacular names which should be used in place of the racist names; and (d) to coin new names where no synonymic vernacular names exist. Examples of ad hoc coinings of such new names are found in, for example, the *Butterfly List* (1959), compiled by the Agricultural Terminology Committee of the South African Department of Agriculture, and in Smith and Jackson (1975). It is interesting to note how the authors of these two lists went about finding new names. In the Preface to the *Butterfly List* the following is stated:

Although many Afrikaans terms had to be coined, we have nevertheless succeeded in finding appropriate names for a large number of species,

and the glossary should not be regarded as a mere translation of English names. The following are illustrative examples. The *Charaxes* have been named *dubbelsterte* in view of their distinctive double-tailed hind-wings; the *commodores* named *blaarvlerke* because of the close resemblance between their wings and leaves. Numerous similar examples may be mentioned.

Many of these names are self-explanatory. A case in point is the *Waar-is-die-Witjie*, a species which was formerly captured along the Natal Coast but which has now disappeared completely. The name is most appropriate since every butterfly collector is always on the look-out hoping to find a specimen for his collection.

Another striking example is the *Uniekeswerwer*, which appears only at two places in the Union, viz., Strandfontein at the coast and Giant's Castle 8,000 feet above sea level.

In Smith and Jackson (1975: 4) Smith makes the following specific recommendations with regard to the creation of new names for marine fishes:

**Colourful, romantic, fanciful, metaphorical and otherwise distinctive and original names are especially appropriate.** Many of these names add to the appeal of the fish: jumping bean, angelfish or cherub (*engeltjie*), prodigal son, jewelfish are attractive names to use.

**Structural attributes, colour and colour pattern are desirable and are in common use in forming names.** Sailfin, soapy, glassy, copper, tripletail are some in use. White, black, spotted and striped should be used only when absolutely necessary.

**Ecological characteristics are useful in making good names.** They too should be properly descriptive: sand, rock, weed, mountain, freshwater are frequently used.

**Generic names may be employed outright (e.g. remora) or in modified form (e.g. scatty for *Scatophagus*) as common names.** Once adopted, such names should be maintained even if the generic name is changed.

Both these lists (still) contain a minimum of racially objectionable names, viz.

**Butterflies:** kafferbokrooitjie (dusky acraea), kafferkopervlerkie (kaffir copper).

**Marine fishes:** blou-hottentot (blue hottentot), bruin hottentot (bronze bream).

2.3.2.3 The last subcategory consists of Southern African compound geographic names containing racist determinant components. The following sources were consulted: Albertyn (1984), *Official Place Names in the Republic of South Africa and in South-West Africa* (1978), compiled by the National Place Names Committee, Raper (1972, 1989) and Rousseau (1975).

(1) English

Bushmans River	Bushmansnek	Kafferkuils River
Bushmanland	Bushman's Rock	Kaffir Drift
Bushman's Hill	Hottentot Bay	Kaffir River

(2) Afrikaans

Boesmandrink	Boesmansriviermond	Kafferkop
Boesmanfontein	Boesmansrivierstasie	Kafferkoring
Boesmanland	Boesmanstad	Kafferkuilsrivier
Boesmanpan	Boesmanvlak	Kafferland
Boesmansberg	Boesmanvlei	Kafferrivier
Boesmansfontein	Hotnotsbaai	Kafferskloof
Boesmanshoed	Hottentotbaai	Kafferskop
Boesmanshoek	Hottentots-Holland	Kafferskraal
Boesmanshoekpas	Hottentots-Hollandberge	Kafferkraaldam
Boesmanshoekrivier	Hottentotshuisiebaai	Kafferspan
Boesmanskop	Hottentotskerk	Kafferspruit
Boesmanskoppan	Hottentotskloof	Kaffersput
Boesmanskraal	Kafferberg	Kaffersrand
Boesmansnek	Kafferboom	Kafferstad
Boesmanspoort	Kafferdraai	Kafferswart
Boesmansputs	Kafferdrif	Meidekop
Boesmansrivier	Kafferfontein	

In *Official Place Names* (1978: 13) one of the general principles governing the National Place Names Committee's rejection of names submitted to it for approval is stated as follows:

It does occasionally happen that the Committee has to deal with names that are phonetically unacceptable, or have something unaesthetic, obscene, derogatory or objectionable about them. Its policy in such cases is to point this out to the applicant and to suggest that he consider submitting a more acceptable name. Obviously the Committee's aim in all such instances is to be helpful and to give guidance, while at the same time bearing in mind the principles established from its initial terms of reference.



Since place names with initial components *Bushman* (*Boesman(s)-*) *Hottentot*, *Kaffir* (*Kaffer(s)-*) en *Meide-* can be regarded as "derogatory or objectionable", it does seem strange that a total of 24 such names is included in the list. This could be due either to the NPNC's not regarding such names as derogatory or objectionable, or to the names not being new names submitted for approval but old, established ones. Be that as it may, these names should as soon as possible be reconsidered by the NPNC, together with inputs by local or other interested bodies. In any case, no new submissions of this kind should be accepted.

According to reports in the *Weekend Argus* (21 November 1992: 16) and *Die Burger* (26 November 1992: 19) the South African Deputy Minister of Land Affairs had announced that because of the abolishment of racial discrimination he had asked the Department of Land Affairs "to prepare legislation to enable the Registrar of Deeds to alter the name of immovable property in a registered deed, if the minister is satisfied that such a name is offensive because of any racial discrimination therein". According to the report in *Die Burger* the proposed legislation envisages the changing specifically of farm names if the owners request such change. The report also mentions that Dr Lucie Möller of the Human Sciences Research Council in Pretoria said that "Kaffer" in place names had to a large extent already been changed. Her research showed that at present the names "Hottentot" and "Boesman" gave serious offence. However, the research team approached the issue with great circumspection and discretion, preparing questionnaires for a survey of who were affected by these names and how such respondents felt about them.

It seems clear that pressure for the elimination of South African racist place names is building up and that the problem should be given serious and speedy attention by well-appointed bodies such as the National Place Names Committee and the Human Sciences Research Council.

**2.3.3** This category contains examples of racist secondary senses of language and ethnic group names which are primarily used in non-racist senses. Such names are encountered in original, derived or compound form, or in idiomatic and technical expressions. With a view to juxtapositional usage comparison, examples of these usage forms are grouped together under the relevant names.

### (1) English

- Dutch (Afrikaans; Afrikaans-speakers — usually derogatory)
- Dutchy (a familiar or contemptuous name for a Dutchman or a German)
- Dutchman (Afrikaner — sometimes derogatory)
- to do a Dutch act (to desert, escape, run away; to commit suicide)
- Dutch bargain (a bargain concluded while drinking together)
- Dutch comfort (cold comfort)
- Dutch concert (a deafening noise and uproar)
- Dutch courage (false courage gained from drink)

- Dutch curse (a troublesome, tall, leafy-stemmed perennial herb, *Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*; oxeye daisy, white daisy)
- Dutch defence (a sham defence)
- double Dutch (incomprehensible language, talk; gibberish)
- Dutch elm disease (a fungous disease of elms, first discovered in Holland)
- Dutch gleek (tippling)
- to go Dutch (to share expenses equally for food, drink, etc.)
- Dutch gold (imitation gold leaf)
- his Dutch is up (he has flown into a sudden rage)
- in Dutch (in trouble, out of favour, under suspicion)
- Dutch nightingale (a frog)
- to talk like a Dutch uncle (to rebuke, give advice firmly but kindly)
- Dutch treat (a meal, entertainment, outing, etc. at which each person pays for himself or herself)
- Dutchman's draught (a copious draught)
- I'm a Dutchman if I do (a strong refusal)
- French (bad language)
- Frencher, Frenchy (a Frenchman)
- to French someone (to engage in oral sex)
- French disease (syphilis)
- French kiss (a kiss with one partner's tongue inserted in the other's mouth)
- French leave (absence without permission; a hasty or secret departure; leaving without paying one's debts)
- French letter (a condom)
- German cockroach (a small active winged cockroach, *Blatella germanica*; croton bug, water bug)
- German measles (a contagious disease, resembling measles in a mild form; rubella)
- Goth (a rude, uncivilized or ignorant person; a person lacking in culture, refinement or good taste)
- Gothic, Gothish (barbarous, rude, uncouth; in bad taste; savage, ferocious)
- Gothicism, Gothism (rudeness, barbarism; lack of taste or elegance)
- Greek (a cunning or wily person; a hail-fellow-well-met and reveller)
- all Greek to me, someone (quite unintelligible)
- Greek gift (a treacherous gift)
- to play the Greek (to indulge in one's cups)
- Greek trust (no trust at all)
- Hun (an uncultured devastator; a German, especially in military contexts, or Hungarian)
- Jew (a person considered to be parsimonious or to drive a hard bargain in trading; a grasping or extortionate money-lender or usurer)
- to jew (get a financial advantage over; to cheat by sharp business practice)
- Jewey, Jewy (Jewish)
- to jew down (to beat down in price; to drive a hard bargain)

Jew-bail (insufficient bail; straw-bail)  
Jew bird (any of several black cuckoos with arched bills; ani)  
Punic (faithless, treacherous)  
Punic faith (faithlessness, treachery)  
Spanish fly (a bright green beetle, *Lytta vesicatoria*, dried and used as a supposed aphrodisiac)  
Spanish influenza (pandemic influenza)  
Spanish measles (a disease of grapevines in California; apoplexy, black measles)  
tartar (a violent-tempered or intractable person; rough and violent; savage)  
to catch a tartar (to catch a troublesome prisoner; to have dealings with a person who is more than a match for one)  
Turk (a cruel, tyrannical, bad-tempered or unmanageable person)  
to turn Turk (to turn renegade, to change very much for the worse)  
young turk (a violent child or youth)  
Vandal (a person who wilfully or maliciously destroys or damages property)  
vandalic, vandalistic (barbarously or ignorantly destructive; of, relating to, or perpetrating vandalism)  
vandalism (wilful or malicious destruction of or damage to works of art or other property)  
vandalize (to destroy or damage wilfully or maliciously; to treat in a vandalistic manner)

## (2) Afrikaans

die Boere (the Afrikaners; the police; prison warders)  
Duitse masels (German measles)  
met iemand Duits praat (to have a straight talk with someone)  
Engelsgesind, Hotmosgewind (said of someone of humble origin who, having achieved success, has become an Anglophile)  
van die Engelse besies gesteeek wees (talking English incessantly, inopportunistically or unnecessarily)  
Engels praat (to be drunk; to curse; to severely censure; to be putrid — said of meat)  
Engelse siekte (rickets)  
Engels vir iemand wees (to be incomprehensible)  
Franse masels, Franse siekte (syphilis)  
daar is geen woord Frans by nie (it is clear, unvarnished language)  
Grieks praat (to speak unintelligibly)  
Grieks en Katools praat (to talk rubbish)  
Grieks wees vir iemand (to be unintelligible to him)  
Hollands met iemand praat (to have a straight talk with someone; to put something very clearly to someone; to speak privately to someone)  
Hun (an uncivilized devastator; a German)  
Jood (stingy, avaricious person; cunning, sly businessman; usurer)

jood (a lavatory)  
om te jood (to cheat)  
Joods (miserly, avaricious; cunning, sly)  
Jodebasaar (a busy, disorderly, noisy place)  
Jodelawaai (a big noise, fuss about nothing)  
jodeluis (a low-growing scrub, *Acanthospermum australe*; sterklits)  
Jodeskool (disorderly chatter; noise)  
Jodestreek (a deceitful, fraudulent trick)  
Jodeverneuker (someone who is very cunning in business)  
jodevoël (hornbill; boskraai)  
Jodewins (unlawful profit; profiteering)  
aan die Jode oorgelewer wees (to be a victim of ruthless, merciless people)  
agter iets wees soos 'n Jood agter 'n rou riem (to be very eager to acquire something)  
so astrant soos 'n Jood (obstinately persisting despite repeated rebuffs)  
die Jood betaal (to defecate)  
'n Jood met blou oë (a cunning rogue)  
erger lieg as 'n Jood (to be very mendacious)  
die Jood kul, verneuk (to light two or more cigarettes, cigars or pipes with one match)  
twee Jode weet wat 'n bril kos (crooks are well-acquainted with one another's tricks; one criminal can easily catch another one)  
'n Jodekerk in die mond hê (to have bad breath)  
Spaanse griep (a virulent, epidemic influenza)  
spaansvlieg (the beetle *Lytta vesicatoria*, in dried form used as a supposed aphrodisiac)  
vandaal (a person who commits destructive acts; a destroyer, damager of property)

### (3) Dutch

Engelse ziekte (rickets)  
Franschje (a jocular name for a person living in or coming from France)  
Franse bediening (sexual services provided to the lady of the house by male staff)  
Franse complimenten (fine words which mean nothing, which are insincere)  
Franse eed (a frivolous promise one doesn't intend keeping)  
de Franse kerk staat open (one's fly is open)  
met de Franse slag (hurriedly, without the necessary care)  
Franse verschoning (changing only to a clean collar)  
Franse ziekte, fransoysche sieckt (17th c. Dutch) (syphilis)  
fransoos (a contemptuous name for a Frenchman)  
Griek (a surly, irritable, unfriendly person; a cheat, swindler)  
Grieks voor iemand zijn (to be unintelligible, incomprehensible to someone)  
Hun (a contemptuous name for a German)

- Jood (as a derogatory name and a term of abuse — a person who overcharges, makes usurious profit; a usurer, swindler, cheat)
- Joden (to beat down (a price), not give someone in full what is due to him)
- Jodenbed (an ungraceful, clumsy, inelegantly dressed woman)
- Jodenfooi (a poor, trifling, paltry fee, or inadequate wages)
- Jodengeld (money given in bribery; a traitor's reward)
- Jodengoed (goods of poor quality)
- jodenkind (a member of the Jewish people, often used with contempt or as a term of abuse)
- Jodenlaken (cloth of poor quality)
- Jodenlawaaï (a great fuss about nothing)
- Jodenlijm (saliva)
- Jodenpost (very thin note-paper of poor quality)
- Jodenstreek (a skilful, deceitful, treacherous trick)
- jodentoer (a roguish trick)
- Jodenvet (saliva)
- Jodenwinst, Jodenwoeker (unlawful, excessive profit; usurious profit)
- Jodenzweet (an insipid, watery drink)
- aan de Joden overgeleverd zijn (to be a prey to evil, merciless people; to be in the hands of pitiless people)
- zoo gierig als een Jood (not generous)
- een joodje hebben (to be out of one's senses)
- heb je een ouwe jood in je keel? (jocular question to someone who is very hoarse)
- hij heeft een Jood gekist (said of a smelly person)
- de helft zal wel van den Jood geweest zijn, daar is toch zeker van den Jood bij?  
(one doesn't believe everything alleged or communicated by somebody else)
- daar krijg je het joodje van (that will make you mad)
- een jood over mijn graf (with reference to something terrible)
- twee Joden weten (wel) wat een bril kost (cunning persons are equals in williness)
- neger (a hateful person)
- negeren (to bully, ill-treat; provoke)
- negerzweet (black coffee)
- zo swart als een neger (with a dark tan; very dirty)
- Punische trouw (faithlessness)
- Turk (a rough, unmannered, crusty, cruel, tyrannical person; something regarded as an example of ugliness)
- turken (to rage, rant; to worry, provoke terribly)
- turkenbaan (a job entailing dirty, grimy work)
- aan de Turken overgeleverd zijn (to be treated badly, to be deceived, ill-treated)
- aangaan als een Turk (to rage, bluster; to storm at someone)
- iemand plagen, mishandelen als een Turk (to severely worry, ill-treat someone)

er uitzien als een Turk (to appear very dirty)  
vandaal (someone who is guilty of destructiveness, vandalism)

**(4) German**

englische Krankheit (rickets)  
englischer Schweiß (sweating sickness)  
französischen Abschied nehmen (to take French leave)  
Franzosenkrankheit, französische Krankheit (syphilis)  
Jude (a usurer)  
jüdeln (to bargain like a Jew; to cheat, defraud in selling)  
jüdischer Wucher (Jewish usury, profiteering)  
Judendeutsch (gibberish)  
Judenseele (the soul of a usurious person)  
Judenzins (usurious interest)  
es geht hier zu wie in der Judenschule (it's hell broke loose)  
ein Lärm wie in der Judenschule (a fearful row)  
das ist spanisch für mich (I do not understand a (one) word of it)  
es kommt mir spanisch vor (it is very strange; I don't know what to make of it)  
Tartarennachricht (mendacious (war-)news; a false report)  
eifersüchtig wie ein Türke (very jealous)  
fluchen wie ein Türke (to swear like a trooper)  
Vandale (a destroyer)  
vandalisch (ferocious)  
Vandalismus (vandalism)

**(5) French**

une querelle d'allemand (a groundless quarrel)  
filer à l'anglaise (to slip away unnoticed; to take French leave)  
parler français (to call a spade a spade)  
parler français comme une vache espagnole (to murder the French language)  
Goth (a barbarian)  
Grec (a sharper, blackleg)  
c'est du grec pour moi (that is Greek to me)  
juif (a usurer, swindler, cheat)  
juiverie (a fraudulent practice; a Jew's bargain, trick)  
un nègre (somebody who does the donkey work; a drudge)  
travailler comme un nègre (to work exceptionally hard)

**(6) Portuguese**

judeu (a bargainer)  
judiaria (cruelty, ill-treatment; mockery, derision)

**(7) Spanish**

judío (a usurer, miser; greedy)

**(8) Italian**

Giudèo (strictly according to the law; narrow-minded, stubborn)

In retrospect, it seems debatable whether *Goth*, *Gothic*, *Gothish*, *Gothicism*; *Punic*, *Punic faith*; and *Vandal*, *vandalic*, *vandalistic*, *vandalism*, *vandalize* (see under 2.3.3(1) above) should indeed be included in the lists as examples of racist usage. A decision on their inclusion or exclusion hinges on their being related to extinct or to existing ethnic groups. When related to particular historically existing ethnic groups, these usages could, from a historic point of view, probably be regarded as racist. If, however, a synchronic test of reference to an at present existing ethnic group as well as to apparent disparagement of that group is accepted and applied, it seems clear that the examples quoted above can be regarded as semantically pejorative, but not racially so.

The application of an acid test of the impossibility of objection from the grave as against concerted protest by the living may seem facetious, but not inevitably so if it is regarded as imperative that clear guidance on the racist or non-racist character of such usages should be given in dictionaries. Thus, in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*<sup>8</sup> (1990) a sense of **Hun**, defined as "an uncivilized devastator; a vandal", needs no racist register label, since this sense does not relate to a living ethnic group. Conversely, the sense "a German (esp. in military contexts)" is rightly labelled *offensive* in deference to the particular existing ethnic group. So also should sense 2 of **Tartar, n.**, namely "(tartar) a violent-tempered or intractable person" be labelled, due to its association with the existing Tartar ethnic group. Such a label is lacking in *COD*<sup>8</sup>.

**2.3.4** This final category of examples of racist language in society consists of idiomatic and technical expressions containing the names of ethnic groups as key-components which, in 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 above, were regarded as racist in all their applications.

**(1) English**

a white kaffir (a white person who associates with or is thought to favour black people; an uncultured, ill-bred, ill-mannered, unrefined white person)

nigger luck (exceptionally good luck)

niggers in the snow (stewed prunes and rice)

a white nigger (a term of contempt for a white person)

a nigger in the woodpile (a concealed motive or unknown factor affecting a situation in an adverse way)

to work like a nigger (to work exceptionally hard)

(2) Afrikaans

- 'n Boesmantjie (Hotnotjie, Kaffertjie) doodslaan (vermoor) (to sleep badly; to have a drink; to be restless, in a hurray; to be dogged by misfortune)  
almal se hotnot (someone who is given work by everybody)  
'n los hotnot (someone without any work obligations, who is free to do, to come and go as he pleases; a widow(er) or grass widow(er))  
niemand se hotnot wees nie (to be under no obligation to work for anybody; to be free to do what you like)  
iemand die hottentotsriël laat dans (to give him a good hiding)  
alle Kaffers het swart velle (blacks are untrustworthy)  
'n Kaffer 'n Kaffer noem (to call a spade a spade)  
'n Kaffer se nek omdraai (to open a bottle of drink)  
onder die Kaffers grootgeword (to be ill-mannered)  
'n wit kaffer (an uncultured, ill-bred, ill-mannered, unrefined white person)  
jou verbeel jy is god van Kafferland (to have an overrated opinion of oneself)  
stink soos 'n koelie wat knoffel geëet het (to give off a bad smell)  
soos 'n koeliebasaar gaan (klink, lyk) (to be, appear noisy, rowdy and (or) in a state of disorder)  
soos 'n Koeliekrisemis lyk (to be dressed too conspicuously, flashily)  
soos 'n Koeliemeid lyk (to be dressed conspicuously, flashily, in bad taste or slovenly, sloppily)  
koelietaal wees (to be unintelligible)  
'n meid, 'n ou meid (someone who lacks courage; a milksop, sissy)

2.3.5 The fairly extensive inventory of racist language in society, given in 2.3.1-2.3.4 above, points to the existence of a very real and problematic component of the lexicons of various languages. It is obvious, therefore, that the lexicographer should assume the task of enlightening the speech community on the usage sensitivity and constraints surrounding such racist language. In section 3 various aspects of the treatment of racist language in dictionaries will be discussed.

### 3. The treatment of racist language in dictionaries

3.1 In his article "Dictionaries and Ethnic Sensibilities" Burchfield (1980) gave vivid accounts of the outcries that followed the publication of the definitions of certain contested senses of *Pakistan*, *Palestinian* and *Jew* in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* and the *Pocket Oxford Dictionary*. Confiscation of copies and sales boycotts threatened the COD until the offending definitions were amended. In the case of *Jew* an action was brought against the Clarendon Press by a Salford businessman who claimed that the secondary definitions of the word *Jew* were "derogatory, defamatory, and deplorable". He lost the case in the High Court in July 1973. The judge held that the plaintiff had no maintainable cause of ac-



tion because he could not, as required by English law, show that the offending words in the dictionary entries "referred to him personally or were capable of being understood by others as referring to him".

As reported by Van der Spek (1987), a summary action was brought in 1970 against the compiler and the publisher of the *Van Dale* dictionary, with reference to negative expressions in which *jood* or *joden* appeared. The judgement was in favour of the publisher. Of interest, too, is the debate between Van der Spek (1987) and Cohen (1988), both in favour of the inclusion of the secondary senses of *jood* in Dutch dictionaries, and Stein (1987), chairman of the Stichting Bestrijding Antisemitisme (STIBA), who is of the uncompromising opinion that such denigrating secondary senses of *jood* should not be entered in dictionaries of Dutch or any other language.

In 1969 the WAT came under fire when representatives of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies complained about certain entries pertaining to *jood*. During personal interviews and in protracted correspondence the matter was discussed in great depth by both parties. After a thorough re-examination of the offending definitions by the editors, it was found that some of the entries had been based on too flimsy evidence, or were explicitly offensive. Such entries were either deleted or amended in the list of corrections included in the next volume. Thereby the matter seems to have been settled amicably.

It should be noted that the Bureau of the WAT is safeguarded against litigation in terms of section 17 of the "Woordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal" Act, 1973, which reads as follows:

17. Notwithstanding the provisions of any other law, no person shall be liable to any civil or criminal proceedings or to any damages by reason of anything published in the Dictionary, irrespective of whether such publication took place before or after the commencement of this Act.

Despite any existing legal protection, editors of dictionaries are not immune from protests in the media or from some other form of unfavourable reaction, for instance sales boycotts. Although such a situation will cause the editors to become increasingly conscious of the sensitivity surrounding certain controversial entries, and of the need to treat them with due caution, the editors should nevertheless not allow themselves to be buffeted beyond control by emotionally whipped up winds of change. What is needed are cool heads and a strict and dispassionate adherence to professional responsibilities and integrity in order to arrive at a clearly defined and consistently applicable editorial policy and editorial system for dealing with controversial, and especially racist material. The experienced editor will of course be aware, and constantly take account of current and changing semantic and social values, particularly in the way they affect linguistic relations between different ethnic and other groups. The examples given under 2.3.1.1(1)-(3) above point to an initially

non-racist status which due to changing social awareness and values, are now labelled racist.

The three cardinal questions relevant to the preparation of dictionary entries in general are also applicable to the handling of racist lexical items in particular, namely:

- (1) Should the item be included or excluded?
- (2) How should the item be defined, including the choice and handling of usage labels?
- (3) Should usage examples, i.e. editorial examples or illustrative quotations, be given with definitions and, if so, to what purpose and extent?

### 3.2 Inclusion or exclusion of racist lexical items

**3.2.1** It is generally accepted that dictionaries, especially the larger, comprehensive dictionaries, should mirror all the manifold facets of the linguistic society and times in which they are compiled. The task of the lexicographer therefore involves the inclusion also of lexical items which can generally be classed as taboo, such as obscene, sexist, sacrilegious and racist terms, provided such inclusions are well attested by adequate recordings of use. Compare the pronouncement of Heestermans (1992: 41, translated) on the inclusion in the *Van Dale Groot Woordenboek der Nederlandse Taal*<sup>12</sup> (1992) of words that are insulting to groups in society:

Such words should be included in a dictionary if they have been current for at least a few years ... If the dictionary indeed wants to be a mirror of society, it would be incorrect to block out and make invisible the unpleasant sides of society. But then the dictionary, as a mirror of society, should also reflect the judgement of society on these words. The contents of a dictionary is in fact co-determined by the visions and views which are alive in society.

In adhering to this principle the lexicographer would be carrying out his duty as language historiographer. It would also be in keeping with the definition of a dictionary and its aims presented by Berg (n.d.: 4) and quoted with approval by Zgusta (1971: 197):

A dictionary is a systematically arranged list of socialized linguistic forms compiled from the speech-habits of a given speech-community and commented on by the author in such a way that the qualified reader understands the meaning ... of each separate form, and is informed of the relevant facts concerning the function of that form in its community.

Of "socialized" Berg says:

Linguistic forms are social facts in so far as they result from individual utterances being socialized, i.e. imitated time after time, under similar circumstances, by members of the community where they originated.

Instead of being swept under the carpet, racist language should indeed be included in the larger dictionaries, because by its inclusion the lexicographer can fulfil one of his most important functions, namely the giving of adequate guidance for the correct evaluation and usage of such language, which undeniably forms part of the lexicon he is describing.

**3.2.2** It is illuminating to note what dictionaries themselves say about the inclusion or exclusion of racist terms. The following is but a small sample of such editorial policy statements, usually given in prefaces:

- (1) The *Funk & Wagnalls New College Standard Dictionary* (1956) states its case on page vi of the Plan of the dictionary:

*Vulgarisms:* A conscientious lexicographer may omit words or meanings of unquestionable vulgarity from a general dictionary; but, however greatly he may deplore the use of certain terms which are considered derogatory or offensive by individuals, or by persons of various races, nations, or religious beliefs, he cannot ignore them if they are widely encountered in reading or in speech. A thoughtful person, who would not intentionally injure the feelings of a neighbor or an employee, may do so in ignorance if unaware that the word he uses is offensive. Hence, particular attention has been given to such entries in this dictionary, and care has been taken to caution against the use of those that are especially likely to arouse ill feeling.

- (2) On page vii of the Preface to volume II of *A supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary* (1976) the three main conclusions on the topic of inclusion or exclusion are referred to, namely that

- (i) offensiveness to a particular group, minority or otherwise, is unacceptable as the sole ground for the exclusion of any word or class of words from the *O.E.D.*; (ii) it is therefore desirable to enter new racial and religious terms however opprobrious they may seem to those to whom they are applied and often to those who have to use them, or however controversial the set of beliefs professed by the members of minority sects; (iii) it is also desirable, in order to avoid misunderstanding and consequent hostility, that the somewhat antiquated historical record of words like *Jesuit*, *Jew*, *Negro*, *nigger*, and others already

treated in the *O.E.D.* should be brought up to date. These things we have done.

- (3) On page ix of the Preface *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (1990) sets out its policy on the inclusion and handling of offensive words and uses:

Far greater difficulty attends the treatment of vocabulary that is or can be offensive, either generally or to particular groups of people. All languages contain such words, and no dictionary that claims to treat the language in current use can exclude them. In this edition we have added the label *offens.* to words and uses that are offensive either directly because they offend the people they refer to or by indirect reference or association, often by historical stereotypes. Linguistic usage in such stereotypes is seldom concerned with historical truth but the use, once established, has to be explained, and I hope that by explaining them with appropriate historical comment and a clear indication of the offensiveness involved, a better awareness of their inherent distastefulness may be generated.

- (4) In 1992 the Board of Control of the *Woordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal* decided, at the instance of the editors, that racist lexical items and sense aspects should only be included if they qualify for inclusion in terms of the WAT's editorial policy regarding inclusions. This policy follows the internationally accepted practice that inclusions should be based on sufficiently conclusive written or oral evidence of the well-established existence and use of such items or senses in the lexicon described in a particular dictionary.
- (5) The picture of editorial policies regarding the inclusion or exclusion of racist items would not be complete without at least one example of an exclusionist standpoint. In the foreword to *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language* (Second College Edition, 1972), p. viii, the editor, David B. Guralnik, defends his policy of excluding "a handful of old, well-known vulgate terms for sexual and excretory organs and functions" on the practical grounds "that there is still objection in many quarters to the appearance of these terms in print". In a similar vein, it was decided in the selection process "that this dictionary could easily dispense with those true obscenities, the terms of racial or ethnic opprobrium, that are, in any case, encountered with diminishing frequency these days" (from the quotation in Burchfield 1980: 21-22).

**3.2.3** The ideal editorial situation of having a free hand in the inclusion of racist language in dictionaries, as indicated in 3.2.1-3.2.2 above, could be chal-

lenged by in-house commercial considerations related to the target user market. Fearing a possible ban by education authorities and a resulting financial loss, the editor as well as the publisher of a school dictionary, or of a general adult dictionary that may be used lucratively in schools, would rather exercise the prudent editorial option of exclusion. Such a decision is given his blessing by Burchfield (1980: 22), a staunch and consistent defender of free lexicography, when, with reference to the inclusion of vulgar words and terms of racial abuse in larger dictionaries, he says: "In smaller dictionaries, and in school dictionaries, the absence of such vocabulary needs no defense."

The sensitivity surrounding racist terms in school dictionaries is highlighted especially in multicultural and polyethnic societies like South Africa, where under the present restructuring of white schools, classes increasingly consist of pupils from black, brown and white cultural and ethnic groups. Lombard (1990: 44, translated) gives this situation a caveat perspective:

In the South African society the presentation in a school dictionary is even more problematic than in other societies which culturally and linguistically are not as varied. If the compiler of an Afrikaans school dictionary wants it to be suitable for all pupils who are interested in Afrikaans or who are studying Afrikaans as a school subject, he will have to consider his presentation very carefully. This applies in particular to definientia and editorial usage illustrations which can be regarded as offensive (even if they are in fact a true reflection of linguistic reality). A lemma which could be offensive or unacceptable to specific cultural groups should not be included. Editorial illustrations in any dictionary which is considered for extensive use in South African schools should be neutral and applicable across cultural barriers, otherwise the dictionary will not succeed.

Destructive reaction by brown pupils who regarded some lemmas and definitions in M.S.B. Kritzinger's *Beknopte Verklarende Woordeboek*<sup>4</sup> (1972) as offensive, insulting and derogatory occurred in 1980 at two Cape schools in the Somerset West area. According to reports in *The Argus* (27 Aug. 1980: 1) and *Die Burger* (28 Aug. 1980: 4) the pupils vented their anger about the inclusion of racist entries such as *baas*, *Hotnot*, *korrelkop*, *meid*, *skepsel*, *witman*, *witmens* by tearing up, trampling on and burning copies of the dictionary.

In view of the very sensitive present and future race relations situation in South Africa the South African lexicographer will need all the vigilance, discernment and editorial diplomacy he can muster. This has relevance also to other types of wordbook, such as spelling and word lists. A case in point is the exclusion from the eighth edition of the *Afrikaanse Woordelys en Spelreëls* (1991) of the following racist entries included in the seventh (1964) edition:

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aia	kaffer-wag-'n-bietjie-boom
Ampie	kleinjong
Boesman	kleinmeid
Boesmans	Kleurling
Boesmanssprekend	kleurling
Boesmantaal	klimmeid
Boesmantjie	Knopneuskaffer
Boesnot	Koelie
Engelse siekte	krulkopklonkie
gammat	meid
Gamsgeslag	meidepraatjies
Hotnot	Mohammedaan
hotnotsgot	Mohammedanisme
hotnotsriel	Rooikaffer
Hottentot	oumeid-onder-die-komers
Hottentots	ousie
hottentotsgot	outa
hottentotsriel	skepsel
jong	Slamaier
Kaffer	Slams
kafferkoring	tater
Kaffertaal	

Faced with a catch-22 situation in which the deletion of these items would deprive the AWS<sup>8</sup> user of orthographic and morphological guidance, while retaining them might invite negative racial comment, the compilers, namely the Taalkommissie of the Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns, decided that racial discretion is the better part of instructional valour. Thereby adverse racial reactions which might lead to boycotts could be averted. In any case, a decision in favour of exclusion could also be firmly based on the circumstance that in a word list such as the AWS a fully explanatory usage and register perspective of these racist items can hardly be expected.

Oddly enough the following racist terms in the seventh edition have been retained in the eighth:

armblanke	bediendekamer	Kakie
Asiaat	boesmangras	klong
Asiaties	boesmansgras	klonkie
bediende	Boesmantekening	Mohammedaans

### 3.3 Definitions and usage labels of racist lexical items

**3.3.1** Having decided to include racist language in his dictionary, the editor should have a clear and consistently applicable vision of how such items should be treated. Underlying this vision should be the taking into account of constantly changing social and racial values and attitudes, particularly insofar as relations between different ethnic groups are affected by such values and attitudes. Above all, the lexicographer, as biographer of the lexicon, should at all times maintain the strictest objectivity and impartiality when defining sensitive and controversial lexical items such as racist language.

How should such items be defined? Obviously definitions should be based on well-established principles of lexicographic practice, while consideration should also be given to theories and recommendations contained in publications on the nature and presentation of lexicographic definitions, such as, for example, those of Zgusta (1971: 252-259), Landau (1984: 120-173) and Lombard (1991) from three different decades. It is also evident that different categories of lemma would need *definientia* tailored to the specific requirements of an informative explanation and indication of the sense and usage aspects of a particular lemma. Thus racist language lemmas would require unequivocal indications, such as usage status labels, warning users of their racist nature. In formulations of the *definientia* of such lemmas the reaction perspective of the potential hearer / reader should also be taken into account.

**3.3.2** After the general statement above of the various definition obligations the lexicographer should assume, we can now turn to practical examples of such definitions. As it can be expected that some of the categories of racist language given under 2.3.1-2.3.4 will require case-specific *definientia*, discussion by category is indicated. However, before discussing the form and content of the *definientia*, we should first take a look at an accessory closely linked to the *definiens*, viz. the usage label.

The usage label is regarded as an accessory because it functions as an indication of the usage status of the lemma, whereby the dictionary user is provided with information on the usage suitability of the lemma in a particular communication situation. Such usage guidance is especially indicated where reference is made to particular social groups or social values, such as those mentioned under 1.2 above. In these cases the usage-restrictive function of the label is of prime importance. This is borne out by Murphy (1991: 56) when she mentions two sources of a demand for usage labels:

Because it is demanded ... that dictionaries indicate whether a term is likely to offend, this demand for usage labels in ethnonym entries has two sources. First, the named populations want terms offensive to them to be clearly marked as derogatory ... Second, dictionary users from outside the

named group expect that less acceptable terms will be marked, in keeping with their perceptions of dictionaries as prescribers of proper usage.

As if anticipating the above-mentioned expectations, Jess Stein, Editor in Chief of *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language* (1967), indicated his views on usage strictures and reader guidance as follows in the Preface, p. vi:

Since language is a social institution, the lexicographer must give the user an adequate indication of the attitudes of society toward particular words or expressions, whether he regards those attitudes as linguistically sound or not. The lexicographer who does not recognize the existence of long-established strictures in usage has not discharged his full responsibility. He has not been objective and factual; he has reported selectively, omitting references to a social attitude relevant to many words and expressions. He does not need to report approval or disapproval of a disputed usage, but he does need to report the milieu of words as well as their meanings. In this dictionary ... we have used labels to guide the reader to effective and appropriate use of words.

Before discussing the application of sociolinguistic labels with reference to racist language, let us look at an inventory of such labels. The following list has been compiled mainly from dictionary sources:

abuse; racial abuse; colloquial and usually contemptuous; in contempt; used chiefly in contempt; a term of contempt; a usually hostile term of contempt; a term of mild contempt; term of contempt or derision; a term of contempt and hostility; contemptuous; now chiefly contemptuous; deliberate and contemptuous ethnic abuse; a contemptuous term; often a contemptuous term; sometimes a contemptuous term; often used contemptuously; controversial; denigrating term; depreciatory; term of derision; in vulgar derision or depreciation; derisive; derogatory; often derogatory; regarded by Negroes as derogatory; usually derogatory; a derogatory term; disparagement; disparaging; often disparaging; disparaging and offensive; often disparaging and offensive; sometimes a disparaging term; often used disparagingly; often used familiarly, now chiefly contemptuously; figurative; hostile; viciously hostile; a hostile and offensive term; a term of hostility and contempt; insult; insulting; metaphorical; negative; not preferred; not the preferred term; objectionable; offensive; deeply offensive; often offensive; racially offensive; offensive slang; usually offensive; sometimes taken to be offensive; usually taken to be offensive; very offensive; a very offensive term of contempt; vulgarly offensive; an offensive and vulgar term of contempt; opprobrious; patronizing; usually considered patronizing or mildly offensive; pejorative; racist; reprehensible; in transferred sense; vulgar; a vulgar and offensive usage; a vulgar term of hostility and contempt.



The above list of 70 labels suggests a closer look at the following aspects:

**3.3.2.1** The appropriateness of the temporal adverbs *often*, *sometimes* and *usually* as qualifiers of the main label epithets, e.g. *contemptuous*, *derogatory*, *offensive*, etc., is doubtful. The dictionary user may well ask the question "When is it (not) the case as stated?" when trying to get an unambiguous interpretation of the terms *often*, *sometimes* and *usually*. The answer will obviously lie in the listing of various communication contexts in which terms generally regarded as racist would not be viewed as racist. In identifying such contexts it should be established "who is using the term with whom and with what intentions?" (Aman 1988-89: 127). Compare also the opinions expressed by Landau (1984: 187):

There are few studies that shed any light on the degree of offensiveness of specified terms under specified conditions. Such studies would have to take into consideration these vitally important questions: Did speaker and listener belong to the same or different groups? The same term uttered with a laugh to a member of one's own group might be deeply offensive if uttered to a member of another group. The intonation patterns (patterns of rising and falling pitch) and loudness will be quite different in the two utterances, as will paralinguistic features (gesture, non-meaningful sounds accompanying speech, facial expression).

As dictionaries could hardly be expected to include such studies in their definitia, the quoted adverbs with their inexplicit applications should be deleted from usage labels.

**3.3.2.2** The 70 examples of labels given above contain 27 keyterms, such as *contemptuous*, *derogatory*, *disparaging*, *offensive*, *opprobrious*, *racist*, etc. (The terms *figurative*, *metaphorical* and *transferred* are not included as they will be discussed under 3.3.3.5.2 below.) In the dictionaries in which they appear the 27 keyterms all refer to examples of racist language. McCluskey (1989) has shown that in different dictionaries the same lemma is either not labelled or labelled differently, despite the fact that the lemma can in all cases be considered to have the same racist character.

If it is accepted that all 27 keyterms point to a common result, namely that racist lemmas give offence to the ethnic groups concerned, the question arises whether the number of 27 keyterms should not be replaced by one well defined label. Four candidates come to mind, viz. *derogatory*, *insulting*, *offensive* and *racist*. The usage label *derogatory* is indicated in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*<sup>8</sup> (1990: xxxii) as denoting "uses that are intentionally disparaging", while *offensive* denotes "uses that cause offence, whether intentionally or not". The labels *insulting* and *racist* could both be classed under *derogatory* as well as under *offensive* as indicated above. If intention (always difficult to prove) is disre-

garded, *offensive* would be a good general label to indicate racist language that refers to ethnic groups. However, since *offensive* as a general label could also be used when referring to other sensitive but non-racist usage areas, such as obscenity, religion, political ideology and sexism, it seems that *racist* would be the best single cautionary label for racist lemmas. Its exact usage significance should of course be clearly set out in the guide to the use of the dictionary. *Racist* could be indicated as denoting "racially offensive".

In view of the increasingly sensitive relations between the different ethnic and cultural groups in South Africa, in particular between black, brown and white, South African dictionaries should be meticulously correct in their treatment of racist language items, including the choice of a suitable label. Du Toit (1989: 62, translated) focuses the attention on this aspect:

For South Africa, and particularly for Afrikaans dictionaries, this matter (i.e. the labelling of insulting language — D.C.H.) is at present very topical. The Afrikaans lexicographer has in this regard a big responsibility towards the dictionary user. Through the labelling of racist, religious, sexist or politically offending items, a value judgement is expressed that acts as a norm for the dictionary user. By means of a label the lexicographer can take a stand against racial prejudice for example.

*A Dictionary of South African English*<sup>4</sup> (1991: xvi) states:

Racially offensive items have been marked as such, but we have not for this edition adopted the marker R ('racially offensive') used in some Oxford dictionaries, partly because we prefer in the present circumstances plain English to a symbol which the casual reader may misinterpret or simply miss.

*The South African Pocket Oxford Dictionary* (1987) is one of the Oxford dictionaries in which "R (=racially offensive) indicates a use that is regarded as offensive by members of a particular ethnic or religious group" (p. xx). Following the same line the Bureau of the WAT will in future label all racist lemmas and senses as (*rassisties*).

3.3.2.3 A last aspect relating to the labelling of racist lexical items is the label's position in the entry. Should it be placed before or after the definiens, or should it form part of the definiens? For example:

**nigger** *n. offens.* 1 a Black person. 2 a dark-skinned person. (COD<sup>8</sup>, 1990)

**gringo** a white foreigner in Spain or Latin America esp. when of English or American origin — often used disparagingly. (*Webster's Third*, 1961)

**hotnot** *n.* An offensive mode of address or reference to a coloured person. (*Dictionary of SA English*<sup>4</sup>, 1991)

Gouws (1988: 48-49) points out that the way in which a label is entered in a dictionary is not arbitrary but has been fixed by convention in order to give an immediate indication of the marked entries. As a result, labels are mostly presented in italics and in brackets. Due to its normal manner of entry (i.e. before and not as part of the definiens) a label appears in a focal position. Thanks to this focus the label's function, viz. to ensure an immediate provision of information, is maintained. A departure from the conventional manner of entry leads to an abandonment of the lexicographical focal position and a resultant fading of the label's usage indication value. Du Toit (1989: 112) is of the same opinion when she states that information provision will be much more effective if the label *contemptuous* (*minagtend*) or *derogatory* (*neerhalend*) catches the attention of the user by being placed directly after the entry word instead of appearing further on as part of the definition.

### 3.3.3 How should racist lexical items be defined?

As envisaged under 3.3.2 the different categories of racist language given under 2.3.1-2.3.4 can best be discussed separately where such a procedure is indicated.

3.3.3.1 Defining the items given under 2.3.1.1 and 2.3.1.2 seems to be unproblematic. All are racist names used in referring to members of specific ethnic groups who are conventionally referred to in non-racist terms. Although it is a commendable practice to add all known synonyms of a lemma to its definiens, this should not, as a matter of lexicographical prudence, be done in the case of racist lexical items. Examples of such definitions are:

#### (1) English

**nigger** (*racist*) A Black American.

**Red Indian** (*racist*) An American Indian.

**Sammy** (*racist*) An Indian man.

**Frog** (*racist*) A Frenchman.

**poor white** (*racist*) A member of a socially inferior group of white people.

**rockspider** (*racist*) An Afrikaner.

#### (2) Afrikaans (translated)

**kaffer** (*racist*) A black person; a black.

**koelie** (*racist*) An Indian.

**meid** (*racist*) A black or brown woman or girl

**Kaaskop** (*racist*) A Dutchman.

**soutie** (*racist*) An Englishman.

**witvel** (*racist*) A white person.

3.3.3.2 General compounds with one or two racist components (see under 2.3.2.1) should either be given a definition in non-racist terms or be referred for definition to a non-racist synonym where other non-racist synonyms could be added. For example:

(1) English

**Bantu beer** (*racist*) Sorghum beer. (add synonyms: mqombothi, tshwala)  
**garden boy** (*racist*) A garden help.  
**ironing girl** (*racist*) An ironing woman.  
**Kaffir language** (*racist*) An African language.  
**kaffir sheeting** (*racist*) Bhayi. (add synonyms: bhayi sheeting, Benson cloth, Bolton cloth, Bolton sheeting, heavy sheeting)  
**native location** (*racist*) A black township.

(2) Afrikaans (translated)

**Boesmanmeid** (*racist*) A San woman or girl.  
**Hottentotlokasie** (*racist*) Khoikhoi township.  
**Kafferboetie** (*racist*) A white sympathiser with black people or their causes.  
**Kleurlingskepsel** (*racist*) A brown person.  
**Koeliewinkel** (*racist*) An Indian shop.  
**tuinjong** (*racist*) Male black or brown garden help.

As Gouws (1986: 77) points out, "it is an accepted lexicographical practice to define a compound in terms of its components". If, however, the above-mentioned "definition in non-racist terms" is to be adhered to, the racist component should be replaced by an unstigmatised synonym or a paraphrase in such a way that the syntactic and semantic relations between the components are still clearly explicated. Definition in non-racist terms also implies that no literal relation between the components of the compound should be assumed and stated when the compound's figurative sense is defined. Let us look at the following example from WAT V (1968, translated):

**Kafferhond.** 1. Dog belonging to a Kaffir. 2. **kafferhond.** a. Inferior, no-pedigree dog, such as is found among Kaffirs; Kaffir mongrel. b. (*obsolete*) Name for a cockroach.

In sense 1. "Kaffir" should be replaced by "black" and in 2.a. the phrase "such as is found among Kaffirs" as well as the synonym "Kaffir mongrel" should be deleted. The lemma should also be indicated as (*racist*).

It is important in this case that the lexicographer should be very sensitive to components of compounds which could become stigmatized in the future. When defining, the lexicographer should put himself in the position of both the hearer/reader of his time and the hearer/reader of the future. The component

*inboorling* (native) of the Afrikaans compound *inboorlingtaal* (native language) would perhaps not give offence at present, but might well do so in the future. The lexicographer should therefore preferably choose an undoubtedly neutral term or phrase for the component *inboorling* in a definition of *inboorlingtaal*, for example: "Taal van enigeen van oorspronklik inheemse bevolkingsgroepe" (Language of any one of originally indigenous population groups).

3.3.3.3 Compound vernacular names of fauna and flora containing racist first components can be defined either by referring the lemma to a non-racist synonym for definition or, where such a synonym is non-existent, by defining the racist name where it appears as an entry word. The following are examples of these two alternatives:

(1) Fauna

(a) English

**Hottentot god** (*racist*) Praying mantis. (definition at *mantis*)

**Kaffir crane** (*racist*) Crowned crane. (definition at *crane*)

**niggergoose** (*racist*) Cormorant.

**Bushman rice** (*racist*) The larvae of termites.

**Hottentot fish** (*racist*) Any of several brownish-coloured fish species of the genus *Pachymetopon*, family *Sparidae*, e.g. *P. blochii*, *P. aeneum* and *P. grande*.

(b) Afrikaans (translated)

**boesmanhaantjie** (*racist*) Dagbrekertjie. (add synonyms: jappie, klapklappie, sekelvlerkspekvreter)

**hottentotsvydopluis** (*racist*) Suurvydopluis. (add synonym: vygiedopluis)

**kaffermossie** (*racist*) Bergmossie. (add synonyms: blesmossie, grasvink, ka-neelmossie, koringvoël, wildevoël)

**hottentotsluis** (*racist*) A darker form of the well-known human lice species.

**kafferbokrooitjie** (*racist*) Medium-sized yellow or reddish-brown butterfly, *Acraea esebria* of the family *Nymphalidae*.

**kafferpruimboorder** (*racist*) A large, bark-coloured snout-beetle, *Mecocorynus loripes* of the family *Curculionidae*.

(2) Flora

(a) English

**Hottentot bread** (*racist*) Elephant's foot. (definition under *elephant*)

**Kaffir tree** (*racist*) Coral tree. (definition under *coral*)

**nigger daisy** (*racist*) Black-eyed Susan. (definition under *Susan*)

**Hottentot cabbage** (*racist*) Any of several *Anthericum* species of the family *Liliaceae*, of which the developing inflorescences can be used as vegetables, e.g. *A. ciliatum*, *A. hispidum*, *A. revolutum*.

**Kaffir bride** (*racist*) A fairly large shrub, *Pavetta corymbosa* of the family Rubiaceae, bearing white, tube-shaped flowers.

**Kaffir grapes** (*racist*) A small shrub, *Pollichia campestris* of the family Caryophyllaceae, with fruit-bearing twigs resembling bunches of grapes.

(b) Afrikaans (translated)

**boesmanamandel** (*racist*) Bitteramandel. (add synonym: wildeamandel)

**hottentotsvy** (*racist*) Choena. (add synonyms: elandsvy, ghoenavy, ghôkum, ghoukom, gladvy, perdevy, suurvy)

**kafferpruim** (*racist*) Suurpruim. (add synonyms: suurbessie, wildepruim)

**koeliedruiwe** (*racist*) 1 Belhambra. 2 Inkbessiebos. (add synonym to 2: bobbejaandruiwe)

**meidestert** (*racist*) Damarara. (add synonyms: bontbeeskoutjie, marara-uintjie)

**boesmanboegoe** (*racist*) A small, aromatic subshrub, *Ocimum fruticosum* of the family Labiatae, bearing two-lipped flowers.

**hottentotstoontjie** (*racist*) The stem succulents *Duvalia polita* and *Stapelia gigantea*, both of the family Asclepiadaceae.

**kafferboontjie** (*racist*) Annual summer legume, *Vigna sinensis* of the family Leguminosae, cultivated for fodder and soil-improvement.

3.3.3.4 Customarily place names are not entered as lemmas in non-encyclopaedic dictionaries. The exceptions are those place names which are also used as common names or in idiomatic expressions, for example:

**Sodom** *n.* a wicked or depraved place. (COD<sup>8</sup>,1990)

**Timbuctoo** *n.* any distant or remote place. (COD<sup>8</sup>,1990)

**Yorkshire** 2. Used allusively, esp. in reference to the †boorishness, cunning, sharpness, or trickery attributed to Yorkshire people. *To come (or put) Yorkshire on one*, to cheat, dupe, overreach him. *Yorkshire bite*, a sharp overreaching action or person. †Also in prov. phr. *a pair of Yorkshire sleeves in a goldsmith's shop*, said of anything worthless. (OED, 1933)

**Stellenbosch** *vb. trns.* and *name* 1. *vb.* Anglo-Boer War term: to relegate an incompetent or foolhardy officer to a post where he is unable to do harm, usu. as *pass*: *to be ~ed*: *fig.* to put a difficult or controversial person in a position on the shelf. *cf. Fr. Limoger* to relegate to Limoges. [*fr. name of town, then a military post*] 2. The site of a prehistoric Stone Age culture. [*fr. place name*] (Dictionary of SA English<sup>4</sup>, 1991)

**AKEN.** *Aken en Keulen*, ... in transferred sense, the total number of various things taken together; everything combined; and, with further extension of the notion, a whole lot, a large number of all kinds of things together, quite a lot. *Aken en Keulen zijn niet op één dag gebouwd*, big undertakings are not completed in a short time; a big job requires time and patience; an admonition

not to be overhasty in a matter of great extent, or, not to wish for too much all at once. (*WNT II*, 1898, translated)

As far as could be ascertained only *Kafferland* in the list of geographic names with racist components given under 2.3.2.3 is also used in idiomatic expressions, which are explicated as follows in *WAT V* (1968, translated):

**Kafferland.** *Familie wees so ver soos (as) van hier na Kafferland*, distantly related. *Hy dink (verbeel hom) hy is god van Kafferland*, he has a high opinion of himself.

Incidentally, the lemma *Kafferland* in the *WAT* should be labeled (*racist*), and in the definition (translated), viz. "Territory inhabited by Kaffirs", "black people" should be substituted for "Kaffirs".

The 58 English and Afrikaans geographic names with *Bushman* (*Boesman(s)-*), *Hottentot* (*Hottentot(s)-*), *Kaffir* (*Kaffir(s)-*) and *Meide-* will not be entered in non-encyclopaedic dictionaries.

3.3.3.5 Under 2.3.3. fairly extensive lists are given of examples in various languages of racist secondary senses of language and ethnic group names which in their primary senses are used with non-racist connotations. These names are encountered in original, derived or compound form, or in idiomatic and technical expressions. As the examples of such names are accompanied by denotations of their secondary senses, they can be regarded as rough-and-ready dictionary entries. Thus we need only discuss two major aspects which relate to the editorial refinement of the definitia of these entries.

3.3.3.5.1 Should the lexicological connection between the primary and secondary senses of the above-mentioned lexical items be referred to in the formulation of the secondary senses? It seems that diachronic dictionaries regard such a reference as required. Let us look at the treatment by three diachronic dictionaries of secondary senses of *Jew*.

(1) In the *OED V* (1933) sense 2 of *Jew sb.* read as follows:

*transf.* As a name of opprobrium or reprobation; *spec.* applied to a grasping or extortionate money-lender or usurer, or a trader who drives hard bargains or deals craftily. (Illustrative examples 1606-1844.)

This definition was replaced in the *OED Supplement II* (1976) by the following one:

*transf.* and *offensive.* As a name of opprobrium: *spec.* applied to a grasping or extortionate person (whether Jewish or not) who drives hard bargains. (Illustrative examples 1846-1964.)

The following lexicological note was also added:

In medieval England, Jews, though engaged in many pursuits, were particularly familiar as money-lenders, their activities being publicly regulated for them by the Crown, whose protégés they were. In private, Christians also practised money-lending, though forbidden to do so by Canon Law. Thus the name of Jew came to be associated in the popular mind with usury and any extortionate practices that might be supposed to accompany it, and gained an opprobrious sense.

(2) In the *WNT VII* (1926) the following senses of **JOOD** are elucidated by lexicological comments (translated):

4) The Israelites rejected Jesus and crucified him; as a result their name became synonymous with despiser, scorner, enemy of the Christians of Christianity; for this reason they suffered, and in some countries are still suffering, all kinds of oppression and persecution.

5) Due to various peculiarities of personal appearance, manners, customs and character, the Israelites are exposed to derision, insults, contempt; hence *Jew* as a contumelious name and — frequently intensified by an adj. with an unfavourable meaning — as a term of abuse.

6) The Israelites, especially the less esteemed among them, often earn their livelihood by various kinds of commerce and street trade; they are buyers of and dealers in second-hand goods, money-changers, moneylenders, etc. (These sense 6 comments apparently serve as pointers to the development of sense 7 — D.C.H.)

7) In an unfavourable conception, metaphorical. Someone who overcharges, who takes usurious profit; usurer; swindler; cheat.

(3) The following (translated) appears under sense 3 of **JUDE** in the *Deutsches Wörterbuch IV* (1877):

3) *of their bad qualities, particularly their uncleanness, as well as their profitseeking and their taste for usury are emphasized in diverse phrases. dirty as an old Jew; he thinks like a Jew; linked therewith to taste like a Jew, repulsive, and accentuated to taste like a dead Jew ... to profiteer, cheat, lend, borrow like a Jew.*



Sense 4 of **Dutch A. adj.** is formulated as follows in *OED III* (1933):

Characteristic of or attributed to the Dutch; often with an opprobrious or derisive application, largely due to the rivalry and enmity between the English and Dutch in the 17th c.

Often with allusion to the drinking habits ascribed to the 'Dutch'; also to the broad heavy figures attributed to the Netherlanders, or to their flat-bottomed vessels. Sometimes little more than = foreign, un-English.

*Dutch auction, bargain, concert, courage, glee, nightingale, uncle:* see AUCTION, BARGAIN, etc. *Dutch comfort, consolation, defence, feast, palate, reckoning, widow:* see quotes.

This presents another example of bridging the lexicological gap between the primary and secondary senses of ethnic group names and their derivatives.

Although this bridging action may be regarded as faithful adherence to a respected diachronic lexicographic principle, it could synchronically also be argued that this procedure entrenches and perpetuates the racist character ascribed to such secondary senses. This aspect of the treatment of racist language in dictionaries will be taken further in 3.3.3.5.2.

**3.3.3.5.2** If it is decided that the above-mentioned lexicological data should not be attached to the definitia of the secondary senses of ethnic group names in synchronic dictionaries, the question remains whether such secondary senses should be regarded as reflecting on the group name, and if so, what label should be used to indicate such a reflection.

In the case of lexical items noted under 2.3.1-2.3.2 there seems to be no problem in regarding and labelling them as *racist*. With regard to the secondary senses illustrated under 2.3.3, however, the lexicographer finds himself in a Scylla and Charybdis situation. On the one hand he might argue, in support of his decision to include such senses, that these senses are used metaphorically and therefore in a non-racist application. In such a case the usage could merely be indicated as (*metaph.*), (*fig.*) or (*transf.*), thus causing any direct references to the particular ethnic groups to be eliminated. If, on the other hand, the lexicographer should decide to safeguard himself against a possible critical onslaught, he might decide to use various clear-cut labels such as (*derog.*), (*offens.*) or (*racist*) to mark the acknowledged racist nature of the secondary senses. As obviously cautionary labels they might succeed in giving the desired usage direction as well as smoothing the ruffled feathers of the more hostile critics.

Deciding which one of the above two mechanisms should be employed, could be a difficult matter for the lexicographer. His choice would to a large extent depend on the target market envisaged for his dictionary, and also on

his willingness to take into account well-established lexicographical principles as well as sound practical perspectives.

**3.3.3.6** The examples of racist expressions presented under 2.3.4 differ from those given under 2.3.3 insofar as the former category contains the names of ethnic groups as key-components which are regarded as racist in all their applications, for example *kaffir*, *nigger*, *hotnot*, *koelie*, *meid*.

Here, too, the lexicographer is confronted with the two problems stated in 3.3.3.5.1 and 3.3.3.5.2, namely whether to incorporate in the definiens an explanation of the lexicological connection between the key-components and the senses of the expressions, and which type of label to employ that will function as an indication of usage caution.

It seems that dictionaries in general do not offer lexicological explanations of derogatory expressions containing the above-mentioned key-components. For instance, neither the *OED Supplement II* (1976) nor *Webster's Third* (1961) gives any indication of the origin of the expression *a nigger in the woodpile* (a concealed motive or unknown factor affecting a situation in an adverse way). Compare also an interesting example in the *WAT VI* (1976). The expression *koelietaal wees vir iemand* is defined (translated) as "to be unintelligible to someone". The definition of *koelietaal* (sense 2), viz. "(*transf.*) Strange, unfamiliar, unintelligible, jabbering language" is however complemented by the addition of "that sounds like *Koelietaal* (sense 1)". (This sense is defined as "In general, language spoken by *Koelies* as their mother tongue; especially, any one of the Indian languages spoken by *Koelies* in South Africa".) It seems therefore that dictionaries do not consider it necessary to include explanations of lexicological origin in their definienda of expressions, whether racist or not.

The same problem of the choice of usage labels discussed in 3.3.3.5.2 is encountered in respect of the handling in dictionaries of the type of expression referred to above. In this case, too, the lexicographer will have to decide on either a semantically indicative label, such as (*fig.*), (*metaph.*), (*transf.*), or an unambiguous cautionary usage label like (*derog.*), (*offens.*) or (*racist*). Identical decisional considerations previously stated apply in this case.

### 3.4 Usage examples of racist lexical items

**3.4.1** Usage examples can consist of quotations (also called "citations"), editorially constructed sentences or phrases, and collocations. (For a discussion of the important role played by collocations in monolingual explanatory dictionaries, see the instructive paper by Van Niekerk 1992.)

In his referentially well-documented paper on usage examples in dictionaries Lombard (1992: 149) points out that usage examples have a semantic, syntactic and pragmatic function. The following quotation from Landau (1984:

166) gives an indication in a nutshell of the functional applications of usage examples:

The illustrative quotations or invented phrases that exemplify meaning are a critical part of the dictionary definition and should not be regarded as mere appurtenances. Illustrative quotations can convey a great deal of information about collocation, variety of usage (degree of formality, humorous or sedate context), connotation (affective implications), grammatical context (if a verb, does it take an indirect object?), and, of course designative meaning. Often there is no better way to provide this information than by an illustrative quotation. Short, invented phrases are frequently essential to tell the reader how the definition is actually used in ordinary contexts.

**3.4.2** An important question to be decided about usage examples of racist lexical items is whether or not such examples should be included in entries of the racist items. In 1992 the editors of the *WAT* decided that (provisionally?) no usage examples of a racist nature would in future be included in the *WAT*. This exclusion also refers to the use in non-racist entries of examples (mostly quotations) that contain racist elements. Such examples should be judiciously edited to free them from racist features which are not regarded as necessary for a full understanding of the relevant sense as defined. What was said in the last paragraph of 3.3.3.2 also applies in this instance. It is tantamount to the sensitive and thoughtful lexicographer donning the prophet's mantle which would put him in the position of the hearer/reader of today and tomorrow. Also that which could give offence in the future should in advance be excluded from the dictionary entry. The following are Afrikaans examples of such editing:

**kryttekening** ... Allerhande klomp kryttekeninge deur die kleurlingkinders. (Delete "kleurling" (= coloured) and substitute " ... ")

**losmaak** ... Die osse word al losgemaak en veld toe aangejaag; 'n kaffer stap hul agterna. (Delete "'n kaffer stap hul agterna" (= a Kaffir is following them).)

**tamboer** ... Ver op die westewind gedra, hoor sy die ritmiese doef-doef van tamboere — tamboere van Kaffers wat op roof en moord uit is" (Delete " — tamboere van Kaffers wat op roof en moord uit is" (= — drums of Kaffirs who are intent on plunder and murder).)

**uitstalkas** ... Die ronde tafeltjie is haar uitstalkas. Alles kan jy daar kry, kompleet 'n Koeliebasaar. (Delete "kompleet 'n Koeliebasaar" (= just like a coolie bazaar).)

It can be questioned why the *WAT* chose to omit, on the one hand, usage examples of racist lemmas but, on the other hand, not usage examples of other categories of offensive language, for example obscene or sexist lexical items.

The answer may lie in the sensitive colour and political relations prevailing at present in South Africa. Accordingly, South African lexicographers would be reluctant not only to include racist items in their dictionaries, but in particular to illustrate such entries by means of locally offensive usage examples. Their British and European counterparts, however, do not seem to have any such compunction: If racist usage examples were available, the diachronic *OED*, *WNT* and the *Deutsches Wörterbuch* included them. Although the synchronic *Webster's Third* does provide usage examples, including quotations, it sheers away from giving them at racist lemmas or senses, such as *Jew* and *nigger*.

**3.4.3** Lombard (1992: 162) comes to the following conclusion (translated):

Since language is learned mainly in a particular context, attention should be focused in explanatory dictionaries on explicit usage examples that can aid the user to employ a particular lemma with greater proficiency in his own language usage as well as to comprehend it all the more clearly.

Let us now look at some functional aspects of usage examples attached to definientia of racist lexical items, with a view to better comprehension and greater usage proficiency. The lists given under 2.3.1-2.3.4 can be regarded as providing a fairly comprehensive perspective of the various categories of racist lexical items whose definientia could profit by usage examples.

**3.4.3.1** To start with, it is obvious that usage examples can be regarded as convincing evidence of the existence and incidence of the lemma. Coupled to this, the dating of the examples gives an indication of the age and therefore of the degree of establishment in the lexicon of the lemma and its sense(s) as defined. This is clearly illustrated by the 84 quotations of *Kaffir*, 2 and its derivations and compounds, ranging from 1792 to 1973, in the *OED* and *Supplement*. Compare also the 253 quotations of *nigger* (*nigga*, *niggah*) and its derivations, compounds and expressions, ranging from 1633 to 1975, in the same dictionaries.

**3.4.3.2** Reliable quotations can act as proof of the correctness of the sense(s) and racist register of the lemma as stated. Compare the following usage examples of *Kaffir*:

*OED Supplement II* (1976): When we ... were young people the word 'kaffir' meant nothing more than to indicate a Black man ... It has deteriorated to such an extent that it offends people with a dark coloured skin and ... we try to avoid it (*Deb. Senate S. Afr.* 17 May 1973, 2777).

*Dictionary of SA English*<sup>4</sup> (1991): The Supreme Court ruled yesterday that the word 'Kaffir' was an insult and awarded an African damages of R150 (*E.P.*

*Herald* 4.6.76). The Supreme Court ... granted an interdict restraining a white Zonnebloem flat tenant from assaulting ... his black neighbour or calling him a 'kaffir' (*C. Times* 6.4.91).

Quotations in the *OED Supplement II* (1976) are also illuminative of the sense and register of *nigger*, for example:

I hate the bloody niggers. Mustn't call 'em that you know (G. GREENE *Heart of matter* I. i. 179, 1948). I remember that in conversation, some boys occasionally used 'nigger' in reference to black people. I never dreamt that it was a racial name and generally used with contempt; I just reckoned it was a harmless slang word for a black man (D. ONYEAMA *Nigger at Eton* iii, 83, 1972).

In view of the usage sensitivity attaching to lexical racist items, it is doubtful whether editorially devised usage examples ought to be given to prove the acceptability of the labels and definiens of such items. It could be argued that the credibility of editorial examples might be suspect due to imaginable bias on the part of the editor. This could especially be the case when the label or definiens is not also substantiated by quotations. The following is a sample of such editorial examples in the *WAT* (translated):

- aia.** 2. Term of abuse, indicating a weak-kneed person: *Sis, you old aia! Whenever Hennie dares to play with you, you start crying.*
- Hotnot.** I s. 2. Abusive name referring to a Coloured person: *Blooming Hotnot, why do you mess up one's stuff like that?*
- hotnotsdronk.** (regional) Very drunk; blind drunk: *Everyone could see that he was drunk; he staggered and smelled — simply hotnotsdronk.*
- Joods** I b.n. 2. Miserly, avaricious; cunning, crooked, shrewd: *Don't come and try your Joodse tricks here.*
- Kafferagtig**, b.n. en bw. 2. Also **kafferagtig**. Like (that of) an uncultured Kaffir; uncivilized, ill-mannered: *A white man who behaves kafferagtig. Don't be so kafferagtig; dress yourself decently. You should rid yourself of those kafferagtige manners.*

**3.4.3.3** With one possible exception, it seems that collocations are not used with racist entries. Can *to jew down* be regarded as a collocation with *jew* (verb)? When the difference in meaning between *to jew* (to get a financial advantage over; to cheat by sharp business practice) and *to jew down* (to beat down in price; to drive a hard bargain) is taken into account, it is more likely that *to jew down* should be regarded as a stereotyped expression which should be defined. Compare the following view (translated) of a collocation by Gouws (1989: 227):

A collocation is a combination of words which are often used together, but which is not a stereotyped expression, because the lexical meaning of the individual words is constantly maintained and the combination does not operate as a lexicalized unit of meaning. A collocation is therefore not a lexical item, but a combination of lexical items. Consequently it is not entered as a lemma.

**3.4.4** A last aspect to be considered regarding usage examples of racist lexical items is the question of how many quotations should be given with each entry. Primarily their number may be determined by the functions they can fulfil in the entry. Landau (1984: 166) gives the following view on this point:

Whenever actual citations can be used, especially in larger dictionaries, they should. Actual usage has the weight of authority behind it. It provides documentation for the definition, which is really only an interpretive claim made by the lexicographer. He says the definition means thus-and-so based on the citations available, of which the one or two quoted are presumably exemplary. The reader is free to form his own conclusions as to whether the citations are apposite and justify the definition. But the illustrative quotation does more than support the definition; it can indicate its range of application and show whether it is used metaphorically as well as literally.

In line with their historical approach, of which the dating of senses forms an important informative part, diachronic dictionaries would probably use more quotations than synchronic ones. This would probably also be the case with racist lemmas and their senses. (See the figures for quotations of *Kaffir* and *nigger* given in 3.4.3.1.) In general it can be stated that the number of quotations used with racist lemmas in synchronic dictionaries would depend on the availability of such quotations as well as on their semantic and pragmatic applicability to the individual lemmas and their definientia.

#### 4. Conclusion

The theme of this paper belongs to the comprehensive lexicographical category which is generally described as taboo or offensive lexical items. Its aim was, firstly, to survey the types and prevalence of racist language in society, and, secondly, to examine and comment on ways and means by which such language is and could be handled in dictionaries.

The survey showed an extensive range of racist language of which seven distinct categories could be identified. The fairly large number of examples pointed to the existence of a very real and problematic component of the lexicons of various languages. The lexicographer is therefore faced with the heavy

responsibility of enlightening the speech community on the usage sensitivity and constraints linked to such racist language.

In the section on the treatment of racist language in dictionaries it was argued that racist items should be included in the larger dictionaries but excluded from the smaller ones, such as school dictionaries. As a cautionary usage label, (*racist*) was suggested, and sample definitions were given. It was also indicated that the lexicological connection between the primary and secondary senses of certain racist lexical items should not be included in synchronic dictionaries. A case was made out for the inclusion of quotations with racist lemmas, but not of editorially constructed usage examples, due to possible bias by the editor. The opinion was also expressed that a smaller number of quotations would be needed with racist lemmas in synchronic dictionaries than in diachronic ones.

Finally, if this study is judged, from a pragmatic perspective, to have contributed to an increased realization of the need for a cautious and cautionary approach to the treatment of racist language in dictionaries, its aims will have been achieved.

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